

Lost in Translation

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Lost in Translation

by [yungluv](#)

Summary

The blaring thump of George's heart serves as an alarm, reminding him that where he crossed this line the first time there was reason. There was alcohol intoxicating his fingertips as they wound through Dream's hair, there was the excuse of a dumb college party where everyone hooks up with anyone, and there was Dream's sticky and sweet gaze on him, luring him in.

Dream's tugged away from the soft yellow glow of the hallway into the dim, shadow-plagued room, and George welcomes him lips-first.

How could this be a bad idea when Dream's lips feel like that?

Or, George's one-night stand with his least favorite person turns into a little more than that.

Notes

Hello!

I want to make something clear v quickly, this story will not contain full-on smut nor is it

centered around smut. If that's what you're looking for, this is not the story for you! If you choose to read anyway, thank you :)

Bye-bye have fun! :D

Blues

Chapter Summary

Dancing with the devil.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

George hadn't meant to end up here. In the backseat of Dream's car, straddling his lap. Steam paints the windows and dark bruises the two boys, the fully set night now only a blur of blues.

It was an accident. When George sent daggers through the blonde's skull and smeared sharp words across the air between them, he didn't think it would end like this. George was simply holding his ground because while Dream stealing the last beer straight from his hand might only seem like a minor inconvenience to some, to George it symbolized Dream's brutal arrogance and never-ending plot to irritate George to the very bitter end.

Snake-eyed and grinning, Dream had spun some acute comments in return that only wound George tighter. And in protest, George stalked outside with curled fists. Dream of course followed, unable to let up and never knowing when to stop. They stood on the porch of the trashy house party, riled up from the heat of the argument and sweaty from the heat of the room. And they just needed to let off some steam.

George has no idea where the beer is now. He has no idea of anything, really, his thoughts entirely melted as he grinds down against Dream's lap and sticks his tongue down the boy's throat. There's a pair of hands—and Dream has *nice hands*—not exactly on his hips that guide him down each time. And each time Dream groans into his mouth.

It's sort of satisfying, having Dream at his mercy, having Dream *this* affected by him. But George can't exactly deny that Dream has him the same way when he's abandoning his lap and pulling Dream down on top of him in favor of having him closer. Dream's quick to understand, one hand clutching at George's waist and the other pressing to the hazy window as he kisses George deeper, in fact, plunges his tongue into his mouth. Which George takes gladly.

His own greedy fingers sneak under the hem of Dream's shirt, tracing every muscle engraved into the smooth expanse of skin. And then he's leaning away from prying lips to gasp a sure, "Off."

So Dream tugs the thin fabric over his head and discards it somewhere in the shadows. When he dips down again, his lips latch onto George's collarbone, teeth scraping the skin. George's fingers thread through his hair and grasp desperately, jaw falling slack. Warm hands wrap around his waist and slide the fabric of his own shirt up to his chest, Dream not a moment later sucking another kiss into the newly exposed skin.

And the kisses trail lower and lower, no doubt leaving scarlet in their wake, as George sinks deeper and deeper into a pool of loving sin.

He'll regret this tomorrow.

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"I mean, I can see the appeal. Hate sex."

George glares, "That's not—"

"Was it any good?"

"God, Sapnap," he complains, fingertips kneading into his eyes, "You know no boundaries."

Sapnap shrugs, completely unimpaired as he stuffs another bite into his mouth, "What do you want me to say?"

George merely shakes his head, tired eyes falling to his lap. He frowns at a red spot on his inner thigh, thumb tracing over it. The skin beneath his shirt burns in reprimand.

"He's my friend, too," Sapnap defends, "I wanna know if he's got game."

George's eyes lift again, "Fuck off."

"Wow, sorry," Sapnap answers, features turning watchful, "Getting laid makes you sensitive."

"Oh my *god*—"

"So is it gonna be awkward, now," he inquires, "Are we gonna have to start hanging out with only one of you? Or are you guys, like, dating."

"No," George mutters, "It was a one-time thing. And it's not gonna be awkward because no one else is going to know."

He sends a pointed look toward Sapnap, who scoffs. "Tell that to Dream."

George's brows lower, "You think he'd tell them without asking me?"

"Did *you* ask him before telling me?"

George's face falls blank.

"Look, they're gonna be here in a minute," Sapnap declares calmly, "And we've had classes all day. I'm sure Dream hasn't had a chance to talk to them yet."

George sighs, his gaze landing on the door. The ivy embedded into the wallpaper surrounding it grins at him mockingly. "You know he's not going to let me live this down."

"Oh, never."

George's mind wanders blindly to the hypnotic motion of Dream's lips. To lidded, dark, and devilish eyes. To skin painted sapphire and clever hands. The dim and sweltering car.

"How did this even happen, anyway?"

George bites at the corner of his lip. Dream's blazen gaze, the dew-kissed line of his neck and jaw. Alcohol rushing through George's veins and numbing his judgment.

"I don't know," he mumbles.

The mahogany door swings open, George's eyes leaping to the movement. He's relieved to see the two walk in alone, no blonde by their side as they shut the door behind them. Maybe George is saved from shame after all.

They offer hellos, landing in two of the sage armchairs and dumping their bags on the carpet. They sink into the cushions willingly after a long day of lectures, solace lacing their skin.

George attempts to keep his voice mellow when he asks, "Have you guys seen Dream, at all, today?"

Their eyes flitter to him, Karl shaking his head while Quackity answers, "He should be here in a minute."

"You that eager to see him?" Karl teases, knowing all too well how far from the truth that is.

George simply rolls his eyes, and when they land on Sapnap again he receives a quiet wink. It's answered with a glare.

"Why're you asking?" Quackity prods.

George clears his throat as he shifts in his seat to hide the bruises littered across fair skin. "No reason."

There's a steady pause, George finding curious eyes when he looks up again. They leave as quickly as they come, though.

Their conversation falls toward academics, mostly complaints about the mounds of assignments shoved down their throats. George winces at the thought of his own workload, taking the opportunity to lament the paper that's not due for ages yet he's required to start now. Sapnap, however, bothered by any topic that isn't of his own interest, passes over the subject quickly.

"What're we doing tonight?" he asks, voice muffled by a mouthful of food.

"Wasn't aware we were doing *anything*," Quackity answers.

"Well, if you want to be lame, we're not doing anything."

"Is there even anything happening tonight?" Karl inputs.

"There's always something," Sapnap insists, waving his fork at the pair, "You know how rich kids are. And if there's nothing here, then there's sure to be something a few blocks down."

The three debate on and on about the probability of a party occurring on a school night and the ethics of it all, though the words grow muddled to George's ears when the door opens for a second time, his eyes finding it instantly. They catch on artfully disheveled blond hair and Renaissance collarbones exposed by an open dress shirt. The navy sweater thrown over it contrasts jade irises that, as Dream strides into the room, lean and prideful, never reach George. Rose lips sit in a blissful line. George can practically smell the arrogance that he carries with him, his own pungent fragrance.

He settles in the seat beside Sapnap, drifting toward the conversation and stubbornly ignoring George's general presence. His voice is effortlessly smooth, "What're we talking about?"

"Sapnap wants to go out again," Karl supplies.

"Dream," Sapnap declares, clamping a hand over his shoulder, "You're a socialite. Are there any parties tonight?"

Dream purses his lips, folding his fingers together. George doesn't miss the glint in his eye, in fact, watches it with distaste. "Should be," Dream answers.

"I don't know if I'm up for it," Quackity says, "We *just* went out last night."

"You guys are babies," Sapnap complains, "What are we, fifty? Live a little."

"Sorry I want to actually *graduate*."

"You'll be fine, Q, it's just one night."

Quackity's features are light with impossible patience, which George positively envies. "I'll think about it, alright?"

Sapnap grins winningly, eyeing the rest of the group, "What about you guys?"

"I'm up for it," Dream answers with a shrug, and he spills suggestion into his tone when he adds, "I had *lots* of fun last night."

Karl and Quackity's faces turn puzzled at the implication. George clears his throat before they have a chance to ask what the hell *that* means.

He avoids the gaze that finally finds him, jaw clenching at the amused hue it holds. "I'm with Quackity," he says, "I personally had an awful time last night."

"Okay, I didn't say *that*—"

"Really," Dream wonders, entirely unwounded as his voice simply taunts. George meets his eyes, filling his features with disinterest. Dream ticks his head to the side, "My ears seem to disagree."

George's eyes widen, sending as much of a warning as they can. He does his best to ignore the poorly muffled laughter from the boy beside Dream. "It's called pity," he spits.

Dream only beams wider, his opportunity to answer stolen by Quackity asking, "What the fuck are you two talking about?"

"Nothing," George declares.

"Aw," Dream drawls, voice sweetened, "You don't want to tell them, George?"

He's sent a sharp look, "There's nothing to tell."

Dream hums, face scrunching up, "I wouldn't say that."

"I'm feeling really left out," Karl announces.

"I can't believe I expected you to be mature about this," George mutters. The steadily growing smile on candied lips does little to soothe the fire licking his veins.

"It's not that hard to figure out," Sapnap says.

George's eyes instantly snap toward him, as does everyone else's. Dream's face impossibly brightens, though the others have the opposite result.

"You told Sapnap?" Karl complains.

"You told Sapnap," Dream wonders, arching a brow.

"Damn, asshole," Quackity berates, "Now you *really* have to tell us, that's just offensive."

"What the hell does that mean—"

"Oh my god," George mutters, "*No*, I'm not telling you, and neither is Dream. Little thing called privacy."

"You told *Sapnap*."

"Why does everyone keep saying it like that—"

"I *only* told Sapnap."

"Come on, George. It's just them," Dream coaxes. The poised chin and batting eyelashes are met with disdain. "We're all *friends* here," he adds, bittersweet honey dripping from the word.

George scowls, is about to repeat his sure no, when through a mouthful of ramen Sapnap announces, "They hooked up."

George shrinks in his seat.

Velvet laughter curls in his ear from the wicked boy before him while exclamations of disbelief make their rounds. George all the while glowers. He was foolish to think he'd be spared.

"Oh my *god*," Quackity utters through chuckles, "That's fucked."

George rolls his eyes as Karl giggles, too, Sapnap's ramen cup long discarded as he huffs laughter. "Thanks, Sapnap," George murmurs bitterly. He meets sinful green eyes, the boy watching George gracefully with a slender hand curled around his face. The delicate bands wrapped around his fingers sever tanned skin and match the shine of his eyes. He visibly revels in George's discomfort.

"Okay," George announces, palms pressing to cushioned arms as he lifts himself from the chair. He ignores the way Dream's gaze falls brazenly to his thighs, "Great. Well, I'm gonna go. You guys...have fun."

He grabs his jacket from where it lays on an empty chair and starts toward the door without so much as a glance in his direction from the howling group. The cool brass of the doorknob is soon in his grip, and he tugs it open willingly.

The hallway is dim and welcomingly quiet. George is glad for some relief, rubbing his forehead to urge his headache to alleviate. He longs for the security of his dorm which his feet drag him toward gravely. The dark spruce walls of the hallway and warm lighting hug his small figure and provide some comfort, the dragging corridor a promise of a place where he can melt into sheets.

When the door opens again behind him he thinks nothing of it, not until his name is called and footsteps are chasing after him.

He knows it's Dream before he turns, the melodic voice enough to recognize the boy. What

he *doesn't* recognize is the face he wears and the stature he holds.

He catches up to George easily, George simply watching as he does. The boy doesn't carry himself with exaggerated and undeserved pride, his rich ego barely weighing him down at all, actually. His features are instead gentle and a bit worried, critical eyes studying George carefully.

"You need something?" George prods unkindly.

Dream begins winding his fingers together, *anxious*, which George nearly laughs at, "Um, sorry, I just..." his eyes turn even more unsure, "Sorry that they...did you really not want them to know? I wouldn't, I mean, if Sapnap..."

George waits for more though Dream falls quiet. He sighs, beginning to tug his jacket on, "It's fine. They probably would've found out eventually, so."

Dream nods slowly, "Right."

George watches with inquisitive eyes as Dream stumbles through the silence.

"So, are you actually not coming out with us, tonight?" he asks.

"No," George answers plainly, "I have some assignments I should really work on."

Dream nods once again, kneading his fist into his palm, "Cool."

George resists the grin threatening to crawl across his lips, savors the state of Dream because the boy is *never* nervous, never at a loss for words. "Anything else?"

Dream twists at the thin gold curled around his finger, "Uh, I was...was wondering why you didn't want them to know. It's fine, I mean, obviously that's okay, but..."

George's eyes are amused as Dream finishes his rambling, letting the fragmented words fall until Dream's quiet again.

"I just knew they would make a big deal out of it," he finally answers, "Y'know, especially considering we don't exactly get along. Turn it into something it's not."

Dream's eyes narrow, igniting with vanity again. George's moment of content was short-lived. "And what is it, then?"

George shrugs, his own eyes light, "A mistake."

The familiar, albeit *nightmarish*, snarky smile that Dream always wears sneaks onto his lips again. When he huffs an airy laugh, George isn't sure what's so funny.

"Okay," Dream says easily, beginning to turn away. His voice is molasses, dark and sugary and sticking to George's insides, "See you around."

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George had, in fact, gone back to his dorm that afternoon and sat down at his desk. He pulled out his supplies, laid them out neatly across the small surface, and stared at the stubbornly blank page

of his notebook for hours. He doesn't choose when his creativity comes, and now he's dealing with the consequences.

He's meant to have the basic idea of his paper outlined by class tomorrow. And he'd spent *days* brainstorming, (days that were meant to be spent scribbling notes for the self-constructed prompt,) never finding anything interesting enough. Even now, the paper lays mockingly, empty aside from one lone and abandoned "E" from a fleeting idea. He racks his brain for minutes on end and always comes up blank.

It's hopeless, really. How is he meant to come up with his own prompt without any criteria or constraints, without any guidelines? The impending deadline only makes it that much more difficult, because half of his mind paths have been sidetracked by stress and moping.

He stares at the ink pressed to the page, willing the unruly "E" to form a worthy concept. The pen held up to the side of his face and pounding at his skull serves as reprimand and a constant reminder to stay on track. That's all thrown out the window, though, when a knock sounds at the door.

He stands from his chair far too quickly, giving himself a head rush in the process, all too relieved for an excuse to take a break and an undeniable distraction. The pen lands with a resounding thud on top of his notebook, his entire setup soon deserted as he finds the door.

His excitement is drained as soon as it's torn open, though, revealing the last person he wanted to see.

"What are you doing here?" is his immediate reaction. It receives a scowl.

"Game Night," Dream answers through his pout.

George takes a moment to glare before he glances over his shoulder toward the clock on his nightstand. "You're early."

Dream tuts, "By, like, five minutes."

"Ten. And you know the guys are always late."

"Whatever," Dream grumbles, "You gonna let me in?"

"No," George answers vehemently, "Go back to your own place."

He's about to shut the door, halfway there, though Dream's palm catches it. "My room's in another building. By the time I get there, it's going to be time for me to walk back."

"I don't care," George retorts, going to close the door again. Of course, it's stopped.

"You're gonna make me walk in the rain?" Dream tries.

George eyes the drops of rain clinging to the leather of his jacket, "It's just water."

Dream's gaze has hardened, irises swelling with frustration, "What's five minutes?"

"Ten."

"Come on, George."

His tone is honeyed, George glaring at the extra effort. Dream's plush lips sit pursed in waiting,

dark eyelashes fluttering against freckled skin. George steps wordlessly away from the door and stumbles back toward his desk.

He hears the slide of wood and click of metal behind him, followed by footsteps. The sound of soles dragging over carpet practically *drips* of pride.

"Where's Sapnap?" Dream wonders.

George lifts his pen again, eyes tiredly finding the page. "At the shops."

A baritone hum winds through his ears, "Just us, then."

George merely scoffs, "Fuck off."

"What're you doing?" Dream continues, entirely unphased.

George runs his tongue over the back of his teeth, eyes burning into ivory, "Homework."

There's a short pause, save for the shuffling of fabric. "Your page is blank."

"I know," George bites.

"Doesn't *look* like work—"

"Ever heard of polite silence, dickhead?"

"Sorry," Dream mutters.

George's gaze scorches the page for a moment longer, lingering on the ebon scratched into the top left corner. Then he's standing from the desk once again and flipping the book closed. He turns and heads for the small mahogany dresser, Dream watching from where he sits beside his jacket on the twin bed opposite George's. George rifles through the contents for a moment before he pulls out a bundle of clothes.

"What're you doing?" Dream asks.

George starts toward the bathroom, "Getting dressed. Obviously."

He's granted a scoff, "You don't have to do that in the bathroom. Nothing I haven't seen before."

George sends him one more glare before he disappears behind the door.

His attire isn't exactly posh, but it's his dorm and he's half-hosting so he's allowed the privilege of wearing whatever he wants. It's a simple combination, a pair of sweats and a ratty t-shirt. He takes his time in the bathroom, though, brushing his teeth for a little too long and inspecting his hair for minutes on end. When he returns to the main room Dream remains in the same spot, quiet and collected.

George exhales a bit of his tension as he discards his clothes. The shards of rain rapidly descending beyond the window provide him with an easy melody that warms his snowy skin. He begins cleaning his own mess on his side of the room, dusk approaching along with the promise of guests. Dream traces all of his movements as he drifts around the room.

"Cute outfit," he comments.

George laughs shortly, "Yeah."

"You don't have to be so on edge all the time," Dream answers at his tone, "I'm not *that* big of a dick."

"You're telling me that was genuine?"

"Why not?"

George begins stuffing stationary into his bag, "I'm in sweatpants."

Dream shrugs, receiving a spare glance from George in the process, "Still looks good on you."

George shakes his head, sarcastic as he mutters, "Okay."

Dream flops down onto his back, huffing a groan. Light hair splays out over a dark comforter.

"Come on, George. Indulge me. I'm getting bored here."

George packs a final pencil away and begins shoving his bag toward the corner, "Your fault you came early."

"I came from the library, I thought it'd take longer," Dream defends.

"Not my problem."

George glances up, finding Dream craning his neck to eye him. A small pout marks his features.

"When's Sapnap getting back?"

George sighs, looking down again. He grabs the tawny notebook from his desk, feet wandering toward his bed. He ignores when Dream draws himself from the other.

"I don't know," he answers.

There's a steady beat of silence as George crouches down in front of his nightstand, save for the ongoing patter of rain against glass. Storm clouds pour silver light into the room through the windows.

"So were you serious," Dream hums, wandering idly toward George, "When you called it a mistake?"

"Well, yeah," George says with a small laugh.

"You regret it, then?"

George's eyes settle on Dream who watches him from above. George frowns, tucking the notebook away within a small drawer. "Yeah."

Dream's features lay unphased as he thoughtfully nods. "Sorry, then."

George stands, finding Dream was far closer than he anticipated. He takes a small step backward, though he bumps into his bed in the process. "Sorry?"

Dream's eyes graze over George's face. Ivory and easily markable skin, graceful curves and cuts drawing his features, wary eyes watching Dream. Then they sink lower, to where bruises have faded from days of healing. He meets George's gaze again with glazed eyes.

Dream shrugs, "Guess I wasn't up to par."

George's eyes narrow, brows dipping low. He waits for Dream to say something further though he receives nothing. George scoffs, "Alright."

As he's about to turn toward the only spot he could escape from, Dream successfully having cornered him, a hand curls around his waist. George's hard eyes flick down to the gesture disapprovingly though his lips don't make that clear, words caught in his throat. Dream somehow ends up even closer, winding the air tight between them. Close enough for his breath to spill hot over George's skin.

"Was it really pity?" Dream murmurs through tantalizing lips, "Or were you just saying that to save face?"

George's jaw clenches, "You're not as alluring as you think you are," he bites.

Dream's lips curl faintly upward, "Really?" he dares, "I don't know, George. I remember how undone you sounded. So *easy* for me. Could that have been pity?"

George's chest rocks with labored breaths. He eyes the spot where Dream's words fall, can't ignore the desire that creeps into his skull, the one that tells him to take Dream's bottom lip between his teeth.

"You won't be able to use that excuse when I have you screaming," Dream taunts.

George's body flushes unwillingly with heat, face softening and limbs falling pliant. Dream only grows nearer, lips ghosting over George's as he speaks. It burns George's skin though he's helpless to it.

"I'd like to hear you beg," Dream adds conversationally.

George's jaw inclines, lashes fluttering over now darkened irises. He remembers Dream's touch, the memory only growing louder when Dream's hand drips lower, though not low enough. He remembers restless lips under the purple glow of night and plunging into insatiable want. Pressed to the backseat, Dream had unraveled him. The memory alone is enough to shake his breath.

"Dream," he answers weakly, though he's not sure what it means.

A knowing smile sneaks across glossy lips. George traces the sharp angles of his face and glimmering, swollen pupils.

Dream's other hand lifts from his side and the pads of his fingers begin to brush along the milky skin of George's neck, eyes lazily following them.

"I miss when I had you bruised," he muses.

George is about to mutter a snarky response, tell him to do something about it, or offer anything that would have him sinking ivory teeth into canvas skin once again. He doesn't get the chance, though, the door opening then and George shoving Dream away before he can think.

Both turn to the spot where Sapnap enters, carrying a flimsy plastic bag and wearing a hoodie stained by rain. When his eyes land on the pair they turn startled.

"Oh," he blurts, "Um, hey. Didn't know you were here, Dream."

"Yeah," Dream answers unsteadily, "Got here a bit early, so."

"What were you guys doing?" Sapnap asks. He sets his bag down on the end of his bed to begin tugging the sweatshirt off.

George folds his arms over his chest. "Nothing," he mutters, swallowing thickly, "What's in the bag?"

Sapnap discards the fabric, eyes lighting up at the question. He reaches for the bag once more. "Games," he announces, "For Game Night. Look," he pulls out a white cardboard box and a smaller red one, "Monopoly, and card games."

George nods, glancing at the darkening sky. Prismatic lights are scattered across the scene, the ebony pavement far below them still busy with pedestrians. "Any idea when the others are getting here?"

"Should be a moment. They're bringing the drinks," Sapnap murmurs, his focus now trained on setting up the dorm properly enough. He starts wandering around the small room without so much as another glance in their direction.

It's a simple dorm, trashy posters tacked to cream walls and auburn furniture denting carpet. Their clutter is scattered across every available surface without care, which isn't many. Even the most prestigious of schools don't pay much bother to students' living conditions. Shared dorms are only granted twin beds, a desk each, and a dresser barely big enough to fit the clothes of two people. Sapnap and George took it into their own hands to make the space homely. They invested in fairy lights and plenty of blankets, which comes in hand when they're the ones hosting a get-together. Sapnap found great amusement in decorating the dorm, still does, often coming home with handfuls of new items. Though he finds even *more* amusement in hosting.

He always does the dorm up to the nines. This time, his preparation includes laying out all the board game boxes they have on the floor between their beds, filling bowls to the brim with greasy snacks, and setting up spaces for extra guests to sit. Each includes a pillow or two and a colored blanket. George can't help but smile at his care from where he watches in the corner, sat atop his bed, letting the boy work.

Quackity and Karl arrive soon enough, as promised, and a heavy bottle of liquor with them. Sapnap notes something about, "The good stuff," when his eyes land on it, setting it down on George's bedside table to be drained later.

While George remains on his bed and Karl joins him, perched at the foot of it, the others settle on the floor. Dream and Sapnap lean side by side against Sapnap's bed and Quackity finds a spot against George's. And while they begin setting up for a game of Clue, George reaches eagerly for a carton of cigarettes and a silver lighter, in need of a quieter mind. He dips the end of his distraction into a hungry flame and watches the paper blacken. Then it's pressed to his lips.

"Alright," Sapnap announces, "Make your pick, folks."

"I'll be blue," Quackity declares.

"Peacock," Sapnap corrects.

"Whatever."

"Scarlet," Dream claims.

George follows, "Plum."

Sapnap plucks the pieces from the box as they're called, setting them up in the center of the board.

"I want Mustard," Karl decides.

"Okay," Sapnap mumbles, "And I'll be White. Who wants to deal?"

The cards are passed to Quackity as he's decided "best at shuffling". He splits them into two stacks and curls them together, George watching where they flutter. A few are tucked into an envelope and the others are dealt three to each player and a row of upturned ones above the board. The game begins, guesses being called and cards passed around.

George lazily scratches ink into his page where clues don't fit, not all too invested in the actual game though he's content watching his friends enjoy it. They make their accusations along with scattered jokes, the air filling with genuine laughter. When cards are shared so are knowing looks and devilish grins. The blanketed sunlight completely fades away as they fall deeper into the game. George occasionally spares glances toward the moon where it sits above a distant building.

He also, of course, spares glances toward the boy sat just before him. Skin and freckles dusted with warm lighting, eyes brightened by the company of his friends, full lips that hold a smile that's raw and real. A strong jaw that George would like to work open, mussed strands of hair he'd like to pull on, delicate hands he'd like to feel on every inch of skin. Dream has successfully claimed a spot in George's mind, one that, when he visits, tastes of smoke and vanilla and feels like a rush, a thrill, something he should chase just to feel a bit more and think a bit less. When Dream catches his gaze, George always glances away.

The liquor is luckily freed from its bottle and they find glasses to paint amber. George doesn't pay much mind to his, mostly sucks at his cigarette and watches ash curl in the air. He lets his mind turn fuzzy and sinks into the feeling.

"Alright," George announces however far into the night, "I'm winning. Get ready to be idiots."

"Let's see it," Karl dares, plucking the cigarette from George's lips to stick it between his own.

George sits up straighter, studying the notes he scribbled into the page. "Green, in the courtyard, with the dagger."

A cream envelope lands on the comforter in front of him. "Read 'em," Quackity instructs.

With a sure smile, George takes it and begins unfolding the flap. He liberates the cards one by one, reciting the words printed at the bottom as they're revealed. "Dagger," he announces, "Green, courtyard."

A series of groans answer him, complaints of their loss. George merely beams and steals his cigarette back, falling into the pillows once more. "Are we playing another one?"

"Let's do cards," Karl requests, "Do you guys know any card games?"

"Yeah, I've got—"

"We're not doing your shit card game, Sapnap," Quackity interrupts.

"What the hell?"

"Yeah, no offense, man," Dream says, patting Sapnap on the knee, "But it does suck."

George chuckles at Sapnap's pout, the boy grumbling a comeback.

When they decide on a game, Quackity begins the process of shuffling and dealing once again. They descend into carefree conversation under soft lights. In the seclusion of the room and surrounded by each other, the group is the final detail that makes the dorm feel homely. Restless teasing, drowsy replies, and occasional genuine discussions waft easily through the air.

The city lights just beyond their window are a reminder of their fleeting moments together. One day, the disarray of reds and greens and blues will fade away as they stumble toward somewhere more permanent. Though for them, right now is enough.

Eyelids grow heavy soon enough, and when George is finally swept under by sleep, his blank page has carved itself with ink.

Chapter End Notes

Hello hello!

Hope you enjoyed the first chapter, I know this story is gonna be fun to write ;) More to come, leave a kudos or a comment if you want, it's really appreciated <3

Also you can follow me on Twitter for updates & sneak peeks woohoo! @yungluvXD

Sober

Chapter Summary

Talking is difficult when you'd rather be doing more.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

His lips are red as he takes a sip of the steaming latte. The autumn air had bitten his skin crimson, lips falling victim too. Foam sticks to them when he sets the mug down again, which he wipes away with the back of his hand.

"We're fucking lame," Quackity announces over the rim of his own coffee. "Look at us, no one goes to a cafe at fucking—" a smooth glance to his watch, "—Eight pm."

"I like it," George answers with a pout.

"That's because you're lame," Sappnap inputs.

He receives an eye-roll, George leaning back in his seat as snowy fingers drum against the leather. "Cafes are nice."

It's nearly vacant minus the group, the occasional clatter of dishes and caffeine-perfumed air keeping them enough company.

"It's okay, George," Karl consoles, "You just have an old soul."

"I think it's nice," comes Dream's answer, voice low and nearly burning.

"Oh no."

George frowns, glancing at Quackity where he sits amongst caramel light and dark leather. "What?"

"It's starting," Karl chirps. Sappnap giggles into his drink, ankles crossed and propped up against the coffee table in impolite casualty.

George looks to Dream for some clarity but they seem to be the only ones out of the loop. Dream's eyes are vaguely narrowed at the other three, brows creased. Elegant fingers clutch at a mug that he holds with ease in his lap.

Sappnap's giggling ceases for a moment, only for him to utter, "Told you."

"*What?*" George repeats.

"Don't say," Sappnap mumbles through a small smile, "They won't like it."

"You can't do that," George complains.

"Oh, I definitely can," Sappnap sings.

George's frown deepens, dents vanilla skin and graceful features. He casts his glance toward the other two, hoping they'll reason, but he's merely met with, "No, Sapnap's right."

And so he scoffs, his only option being to look to the one closest to being on his side. He sends the boy an asking look, "Dream."

And that sends the three into another fit of laughter. George shoots a glare toward them once again

"What the hell's so funny?" he demands, but to no avail. He's only answered with continued manic laughs. George shoves his hand into his face, revels in the comfort of dark there. Choked giggles still curl through his ears, though. "You know, if this is some gross joke about Dream and I," he mumbles into his palm, "You guys are really immature."

"Okay, it's not like *that*," Karl defends.

"I want to know," Dream declares, swirling his coffee against ivory walls. He seems at ease, especially compared to George, face plain and the only hint of curiosity being pursed lips and barely-lowered brows. "We won't get mad," he offers, "Right, George?"

George holds his gaze for a moment, jaw clenched as viridescent irises coax him toward an agreement. He sighs, "Yeah, whatever."

Dream smiles faintly, pleased, and glances toward the rest of the group in waiting.

"Fine," Sapnap mutters, shrinking in his seat, "We were just saying—well, joking, it was a joke, about how you guys were gonna start acting like...like a couple. Siding with each other and everything."

George hears a velvet chuckle, one that he profusely rolls his eyes at. He keeps his gaze down as he reaches for his mug once more. "Okay, I don't even want to...acknowledge that. At all."

"Aw," the mellow voice rumbles, "Why not, George?"

"Because it's just not true," George answers sourly. He takes a sip of his drink, though it's nearly run cold. He sets it down again with distaste.

"Oh, don't be so bitter. We're just joking around."

His voice stings, so full of faux sincerity. George's gaze lifts and with a clenched jaw, he takes the burn of Dream's. They're tainted with dark mirth.

"Don't start again, please," Sapnap inputs before George can get another word in, "I've had enough of you two."

Dream merely shrugs, eyes dancing along the taut line of George's lips before they fall to the contents of his own mug. The mocha-licked pink of his lips twists into a wicked smirk and he takes a small sip.

Quackity clears his throat, "Okay. Well, if you guys are finished, we should get out of here. I think I'm getting lamer by the second."

"Where do you want to go?" George asks.

Quackity shrugs, already rising from his seat despite not having earned an answer, "About."

George frowns as Karl stands with him, already mourning the loss of the comfort of his favorite

cafe. The ivy-lined walls and secluded atmosphere. Dream sets his half-drained mug down and smooths his hands over his lap, beginning to rise too.

"Sure," he agrees, "It's getting kind of boring, here, anyway."

"I thought you thought it was nice," Sapnap counters, features twisting into annoyance when Dream swipes his feet off of the table in passing.

Dream grabs his coat from an empty chair and begins tugging it on, "Yeah, well, that's how couples are, y'know. Siding with each other on everything." He offers a crooked smile as he runs a hand through rumpled hair.

George rolls his eyes, hands curling around timber armrests, "You guys are just the funniest." He lifts himself from the seat unwillingly, reaching for his own jacket.

"Thank you, dear."

George doesn't even spare a glance in his direction.

The shrill tune of a bell marks their exit, sugary warmth and orange fluorescents left behind for silver skies, punishing cold, and the emblem of city lights. They start down the road, no particular destination in mind. They shove their hands into pockets to protect themselves from the scrape of autumn air as cinnamon laughter leaves their lips. The drag of soles against pavement shadows their roaming. George crushes any fire-stroked leaf he comes across, many having escaped nearby trees.

"We should go to the rooftop again," Karl declares, feathery hair ruffled by wind when he glances backward at the group.

"The rooftop?" George echoes with a scowl, "I was thinking somewhere inside."

"Inside is too restricting."

George scoffs. He'd been foolish enough to convince himself he could withstand the icy weather and picked out a skirt from his wardrobe. "Bullshit. Inside is where I won't catch a cold, it's fucking freezing out here."

Quackity holds his gaze for a moment, lips pursed before they give way to the comment he's never able to hold back, "Dream?" There's a low sound of acknowledgment from behind George, one that Quackity answers with, "Be a gentleman."

George is betrayed by the resounding chuckles of his friend, even a soft one from behind him, and he sends a tight smile toward Quackity. "You guys are on a roll today."

Quackity merely shrugs, freckles creased by the lips invading his cheeks, "What can I say."

"How much longer will I have to put up with this?"

"C'mon, George," he's pulled into Sapnap's side by the boy's brash hand, one that rubs the fabric covering his bicep in a feeble attempt to provide some warmth, "We're just having fun."

"Why don't you guys pester Dream," he grumbles.

"Dream doesn't care as much as you do," Karl answers ahead of him, "It's not as entertaining."

"Take notes, darling."

George ignores *that*.

They continue toward their destination, the one that George can't shake. The cars that slip past them in a rush seem promising and George nearly considers asking to call a cab, though he knows what the answer would be. His friends always preferred marking their path with their own footsteps.

"You've been a bad friend lately, Sap," George mumbles instead, low enough for only the boy pressed to his side to hear. He wraps his arm around Sapnap's waist, nearly tripping over his own feet when he steps out of his way to hear the crackle of an amber leaf beneath him.

"Aw, don't say that," Sapnap murmurs in return.

"It's true," George says, "You're being mean."

"I'm making light of your situation."

"There would be no situation if you didn't spill my secrets, idiot."

"There would be no situation if you didn't sleep with our friend," Sapnap proposes.

"It was an accident," George hisses in return.

Sapnap hums, the sound nearly drowned out by the light conversation ahead of them. "One might wonder how such a thing could be an accident."

"Two might wonder," Dream adds.

George lifts his head from Sapnap's shoulder to send a glare backward, only to be met with a dim smirk. Rugged strands of hair are pushed into Dream's face from the steadily climbing breeze, the reddened apples of his cheeks from sharp air somehow doing little to dull his villainous bearing.

"Stop eavesdropping," George demands flatly.

"You're talking about me," Dream reasons, eyes easy, "It's fair game."

George merely turns around again, tearing his arm away from Sapnap as he stands straight. "Are we going to stop at any bars?" he calls to no one in particular, "I think I might need something stronger than coffee."

"I don't know if that's a good idea," Karl answers.

George scowls, the group coming to a stop before where ivory paint marks a crosswalk against the ebony street. "Why not?"

Karl glances over his shoulder, eyes finding George, "Last time you got drunk you ended up with Dream."

George thumps his head against the cold steel of the traffic light, ignoring the laughter as he waits for the crosswalk light to glow a sign of permission. It only changes a moment later, and he starts across the road without a word.

He catches sight of soft yellow light falling out of the crystal windows of a corner shop, rows and rows of novelties tucked within shelves, and sees an opportunity for quiet. He places a hand on Sapnap's arm and mutters a plain, "Be right back," before he's straying from the group in favor of something smokey to stick between his lips.

The store is clean tile floor and plaster white walls, void except for a quiet man at the counter. The air is crisp, bright fluorescents greeting him when he enters.

He starts down the first row, meandering past vibrant wrappers and false advertising. He scans the stock lazily, hands stuffed into his pockets. Sneakers drag against the floor aimlessly and when he reaches the end of the row, George lifts his eyes and starts toward the counter.

He sends the man a polite smile, eyeing a white box over his shoulder. As his fingers reach into his pocket for the leather of his wallet, George requests a pack. He leaves a wrinkled bill on the counter, showing his ID when asked, and as the money is swept away, George eyes the items by the register. It's junk meant to be captured by impulse buyers, though George plucks a pink lollipop from the stand anyway and places that on the counter, too.

As his bill is turned to change, George glances out the glass toward the group of boys stood on the sidewalk. They chat continuously, occasionally sparing laughs, and George can feel the genuine energy through the walls.

He's granted his items along with a stack of coins, and while copper and candy get shoved into his pocket George keeps the small white box pressed between his fingers.

"You got a lighter, funny man?" George asks dully when he's rejoined the group again, his empty palm extended toward the blonde.

Dream's eyes reach him with a light hint of surprise before he's digging his hand into his coat. He reveals a heavy silver case and dumps it in George's hand without a word.

George mutters a quiet, "Thanks."

The rooftop is far down the road, a spot they discovered while wanderlust. It's easy enough to get onto as the building is bland and hidden, which leaves security light.

It looks out over dawdling citizens and cars that chase an endless trail of black road. The spot is prettiest at night. Fierce lights cut through the shadows left by buildings, a manmade reflection of the stars pinned to the dark sky. The city is quieter, though not quiet enough to feel lonely. And when the butterscotch glow behind glass fades to ebony, George knows that most of their part of the world has been stolen by dreams. And he likes staying up late enough to watch bedroom lights disappear because it means the night is that much more theirs.

George admires the sky that blankets them, thinks they might be high enough to pluck the gems from it. He sucks his cigarette to the very bitter end, only putting it out under the toe of his shoe when sharp cheekbones and glittering eyes sit down beside him. George sighs, glances at the boy though he doesn't receive a look in return. Dream simply stares forward.

"Hi," George questions with arched brows.

The corners of Dream's mouth lift into something not exactly unpleasant. "Hello."

George should've known he wouldn't receive an answer without asking for it directly. He scowls as he buries his hand in his pocket, revealing an object charged with a sugar rush. He tears the bubblegum pink wrapper away and pops it into his mouth. Strawberry mixes with tobacco on his tongue.

"Any reason you're sitting here?" he asks.

Dream glances at him, eyes sticky with honey and his voice just as sweet. "Do I need a reason?"

George huffs a small laugh. He leans back on his palm as the lollipop leaves his lips, running his tongue over the back of his teeth, "Guess not."

Dream eyes the candy for a moment before his fingers curl around it, stealing it from George's grasp. He sticks it into his mouth.

"What the hell," George complains, "I was eating that."

Dream shrugs, frowning in disapproval because clearly, George is the only one who knows boundaries. "We slept together, a little saliva won't kill you."

George glowers, watching where classy fingertips spin the stick that disappears between pretty pink lips. "Yeah, and it wasn't an invitation to be my friend. I don't know why you're always here," Dream plucks the candy from his tongue and offers it toward George, who scrunches his face, "You can have it."

Dream rolls his eyes but nevertheless, swipes his tongue over the sugar again. "We could be."

"What?"

"Friends."

George stares, because for all the time that he's known Dream they've never even come close to the label. "Okay," he deadpans.

Dream's eyes narrow, a vague pout wilting his lips downward. "You're the only one that has a problem with me."

"I'm the only one that says it to your face," George counters.

Dream tsks and the lollipop is popped into his mouth again. His eyes drift toward the empty air ahead of him, silence steady between them for a lingering moment. George watches where the angles of his face capture silver, a constellation of freckles dancing across the bridge of his nose.

"If you hate me so much, then why did you kiss me first?" he throws into the air. It lands and crashes in a pile of laughter on George's tongue.

"Are you serious?" he gasps, "That was *you*."

"What? No, you—"

"Why would I *ever* initiate a kiss with you?"

"Come on, I doubt you even *remember* the night, you were so wasted," Dream shoots.

"I could be out of my fucking mind and I *still* would never do that."

"Why would I initiate a kiss?"

George shrugs, "Because you like fucking with me, I don't know."

"Oh, yeah," Dream mocks, "What a great joke."

George shakes his head, sinking further into the concrete. His eyes trace the edge of the rooftop, the sapphire scraping the railing and clinging to the floor in the form of shadows. He finds a pair already on him in return. Sappnap's features are barely able to be made out through the darkness,

though George catches the lift of his brows and the shine of his eyes.

George frowns, shaking his head slightly.

Dream's eyes find the movement and trace his gaze back to Sapnap.

George watches where the boy's eyes narrow in quiet thought before he's huffing a small laugh. The sound faintly unsettles George, a distortion of laughter not exactly directed at something funny. Dream's eyes fall to his lap, head hanging between his shoulders.

"It's never not going to be weird, is it?" he hums. George can't place the tone of his voice, though it's either annoyance or amusement, or maybe somewhere in between.

"Don't act like you weren't tacking onto their jokes all night long," George murmurs.

Dream glances up at him, brows lowered softly. "You weren't actually bothered, were you?"

George sighs, eyes flicking away again. "No, I mean. They're my *friend*—"

He's stopped short by sudden touch just below the hem of his skirt, scorching fair skin. He glances down, finding slender fingers wrapped around the top of his thigh and a thumb tracing over a spot on the inside. It's the same mark that George had traced the day after it was left, now faded, though while he had observed it with regret and grievance, Dream's eyes are sparked with something like admiration for an artwork. The rest of his face lays blank, though, lollipop trapped between flat lips.

It feels illicit, warm skin on cold canvas and maybe George should feel uncomfortable. But Dream's touch, *god*, it burns away every worry and replaces it with one more desire. It's intoxicating, George is sure his fingerprints are laced with *something* because every time he's granted this he only wants more. And he's sure that's not a good thing, but his better judgment has been fried.

George isn't granted his wish. After a moment of following the bruise with the tip of his thumb Dream pulls away, seemingly realized what he's done. He spares George an empty glance before he's facing forward again, one that George simply answers with widened eyes.

In the following moments of silence, he can still feel the remnants of heat. The trails of static Dream carved into his skin. His once lucid mind now scrambles for sense.

Dream twirls the lollipop between his fingers, clearing his throat. "Are you cold?"

When George realizes that requires an answer, he blinks back glazed irises and smooths out his voice. "I'm fine," he answers plainly.

Dream nods, jaw clenched.

They say nothing more the rest of the night, neither of their thoughts decent enough to give voice to.

-

George has taken many showers since that night. His skin has been scraped by hot water and soap

more than a few times, and he's blinked at white tile for probably far too long. But he thinks this one finally washed off his cravings.

It's embarrassing to say how often he's thought about Dream. Some part of him *longs* for the buzz he'll get from him, for the inevitable destruction that will come if he gives in because this is definitely a bad idea. But after staring at the tile again and considering the worst possible outcomes again he's decided he won't give in. It'll be better if he follows logic because that's what he's always done and it's worked out pretty well thus far.

He reminds himself of this as he fluffs his hair dry, and tugs his clothes on, and with each step he takes back into his room.

He reminds himself of this every time he remembers the shock of Dream's palms on his starved skin, and the addicting drag of Dream's lips, and subtle fangs that could surely turn George purple.

The cold air of his room scolds his thoughts into place where the steamed bathroom had disordered them.

"Check your phone," Sapnap greets as soon as his feet have touched the carpet again, "The guys want to go out tonight."

George continues toward his bed with timid eyes, nevertheless reaching for the phone placed atop his bedside table. He settles in the pillows, sinking into them willingly and he knows that he won't leave this spot for the rest of the night, and definitely not for some party. "Where to?"

"Kingston's throwing a party."

George opens his pile of messages, barely skimming over them before he's typing out a response and sending it through. He discards his phone beside him, opting to reach for the notebook tucked within wood.

"Why aren't you going?" Sapnap complains from his side of the room.

George doesn't even spare him a glance, only mumbles, "Just feel like staying in tonight."

"Come on, last time was so boring without you."

"You'll find someone to fill your time, Sap," George consoles, "Everyone likes you."

"You're just sucking up to me."

George grins, flipping the book open to an ink-dented page. "You'll be fine."

George picks up his phone again at two vibrations, the screen welcoming two messages. The first one was sent to the group and reads *me neither*, and the second was sent to him. The words rest at the top of the screen, a blank canvas only marked by the one-line message.

You haven't been going out with us lately.

George swallows and sends a simple question mark.

He leaves his phone on the pale comforter again and picks up his pen, staring at his page and willing his mind to work. He jots down all of two bullet points and half of a third before the device is tucked within his palm once more.

Is there a reason?

George glares at the screen, hoping it's evident in his sparse response when he types out a "what" and sends it through. He leaves the screen glowing on his lap and picks at a loose thread in his blanket to fill the quiet. Electrified butterflies are steadily stitched into his stomach.

George should stop replying, probably. He shouldn't be this affected by two simple messages, definitely.

Another crawls onto the screen, adding another brick to the wall of *wrong, wrong, wrong*.

Are you afraid of ending up with me again?

George clenches his jaw, fingertips ablaze.

You give yourself too much credit.

The response is instantaneous.

Do I?

George knows the honest answer would be *probably not*. However, honesty with Dream would most likely leave him in ashes.

Yes.

Give up now, it's not happening again.

And why not?

I won't let it.

He doesn't receive an immediate response this time and is left staring at the screen for a paralyzing minute. He wishes he could read Dream's thoughts, know if his constant cocky and collected attitude is genuine or just a disguise for something messier.

So if Sapnap hadn't walked in, you would've pushed me away?

George's mind rushes back to the moment. Dream had been so calculated in crushing him, in making him someone weak and ruining his virtuous thoughts and leaving his lungs a wasteland. And he'd almost done it, too. Broken the unbreakable George. It's maddening that *Dream* is the one who's always capable of that.

George had fallen so far into his cloud of memories it startles him when Sapnap rises from his bed. The boy begins rushing from corner to corner of the room in preparation for his night out.

George sighs, chewing at his lower lip as his eyes find the screen again.

Yes.

Is that the truth?

Yes.

Then why'd you take so long to answer.

I was considering letting you down easy.

There's a blank space where George fills in an unaffected smirk and glittering eyes.

Guess I'll just have to try harder.

George glares at the boy's stubbornness because if Dream had any sort of brain, he would know, too, that if it doesn't end now it'll end in bitter dust.

Or you could just give up.

I'm not a quitter George.

Why are you so obsessed with this?

You never had trouble moving on from person to person before.

George watches where his messages stick to the bottom of the screen, willing a genuine explanation to slip in beneath them though he knows that's exactly what he won't get. A witty reply, instead, is what Dream always opts for.

Is it so hard to believe that I have standards?

George frowns.

What?

Standards that you meet.

Red crawls across George's cheeks. Being with Dream, having him breathless, parted lips and varnished eyes, was it really worth that much to him? Dream, who has had anyone stumbling into bed with him for years. But *this* was the one he chased.

His phone buzzes again, this message leaving George even more unsteady.

Didn't you have even a little bit of fun that night.

George forces his mind to stay on track, his fingers working mindlessly over the keyboard.

I don't know.

Between us, Dream prods.

You say that as if I trust you.

I wouldn't tell.

You'd use it against me.

And then you'll be nice again when you want sex.

George's skin burns as he awaits a response, his lungs labored and choking on flames.

Come on.

That's not true.

You shouldn't text me, George sends, winded.

Why not?

Why can't we just talk?

You never "just talk."

What do you mean?

George grits his teeth, forcing his thumbs to spill the words across the page.

You'll say something stupid like that you want to bruise me, or you'll do something stupid like touch my thigh, and you'll know it's a bad idea but you do it anyway.

George lets the confession settle in a queue of sporadic heartbeats in his chest. He sticks the end of his pen between his teeth.

Why is it a bad idea?

George exhales.

Because we'd never work.

Dream hovers, then disappears for a moment. And all the while George wonders how he let himself get here after promising he wouldn't.

Then why don't you stop me, Dream wonders.

George stumbles far past the line he'd set for himself.

Because I like that.

He sends the message before he can think, letting his own self-destruction win. George stares at the admitted letters and not a moment later drops the phone from his shaky fingers, face down onto the mattress.

"George."

He glances up, chest still heavy and rocking with desperate breaths. "Yeah?"

"I'm leaving now," Sapnap announces, a fresh outfit clinging to his skin, "You sure you don't want to come?"

George nods, "I'm sure. Thanks, though."

The boy doesn't disappear, fingers stuck to the doorknob. "You okay?"

George plasters on a smile, "Yeah. Have fun, Sap."

Sapnap's eyes stick to his skin for a moment longer, George's pale lips and frantic eyes. And then he's turning away and tugging the door open.

"See you later, don't miss me too much."

The door clicks shut.

George sits still, locked to the mattress, in fact, sinking deeper into it. He watches the wall, burning as though the silent air was made of gasoline.

George sighs, picking up his phone again. His notifications lay blank.

George had been doing the right thing. He engraved his notebook with fragile notes and kept his

eyes strictly away from his phone for hours on end. The last bit of sunlight had slipped beyond the horizon, giving way to night, and he had been doing good. Dream's self-restraint seems to be thinner.

He never sent anything more to George, and while George was glad—he was sure it was for the best—he also still heard the faint whisperings of his wants. They asked him to pick up his phone again, to coax Dream close enough for his hands to dip low enough. If he had known that Dream was just going to go and fuck up his progress, he probably wouldn't have bothered with that last shower.

When a knock breaks his thoughts, he's sure he shouldn't have.

George stares at the wood, prays to fucking *god* that it isn't who he definitely doesn't hope it is. And then he's rising from the bed.

With each step, his heart rate inclines. It's pretty fucking embarrassing but George pretends like he can't hear it happening. Fingers curl over the doorknob and send their last plead to the other side before he's tearing it open.

Dream stands a step away from the doorway, and he looks just about as unsure as George because he stares down the end of the hallway like maybe he could escape. Though when the door slips open his eyes snap toward it, toward the doorway that holds George.

George clenches his jaw, logic entirely lost when he sees the boy, probably tumbling down the hallway where Dream couldn't. Dream's eyes are soft, maybe the kindest George has seen them. Large pupils and muted green. His lips are flushed red like they've been touched by the cold and his cheeks are the same. And his hair is jagged, George can imagine the fingers that pulled it taut.

"Sorry," Dream blurts, eyes turning even more unsure when George says nothing, "I—I don't know why I'm here."

George should slam his head against the wall because with the way his mind is going right now, Dream won't be leaving. And that's a really bad idea.

He still says nothing. When many stale moments pass, Dream seems like he's about ready to turn around and retreat. George grabs a fistful of his shirt before he can make it.

The blaring thump of George's heart serves as an alarm, reminding him that where he crossed this line the first time there was reason. There was alcohol intoxicating his fingertips as they wound through Dream's hair, there was the excuse of a dumb college party where everyone hooks up with anyone, and there was Dream's sticky and sweet gaze on him, luring him in.

He has nothing to blame this one on. This time, purely his whims drag him in.

Dream's tugged away from the soft yellow glow of the hallway into the dim, shadow-plagued room, and George welcomes him lips-first.

How could this be a bad idea when Dream's lips feel like *that*?

While hands fall naturally to his hips and George pushes the door shut behind them, Dream sucks dizzy kiss after dizzy kiss onto George's thankful mouth. He's fucking *lush*, his lips silk while everything else about him is velvet. Somehow they remain unbelievably soft even though he's stealing every breath from George's lungs.

George is stumbling backward and leading Dream back with him, coaxing him further into the

room until their inhibitions fall to the shadows. Somewhere along the way, carpet gives way to plump blankets.

Dream's hands drift from his sides to grip the covers and he tilts the angle of his face to kiss George deeper, slowly guiding him backward. George lands in blissful sheets, only to have Dream's tongue dip into his mouth like he's searching for a secret, and George can't help but let him.

His mind goes numb, all coherency scraped away by Dream's tongue.

Dream's hands, graceful porcelain yet so eager, find the underside of his thighs. The dig of his fingers into delicate skin has a weighted breath swelling in George's chest. They crawl slowly upward, George's own hands curling around Dream's jaw to pry it open wider, searching for more. More contact, more Dream, more destruction, more anything.

"Last time," George mumbles into his mouth.

Dream's velvet laugh thunders, eyes licked with cruel flames when they reach George's again. Then he's slipping away, lips latching onto the skin below the hinge of George's jaw. When his teeth sink into the spot George inhales sharply, eyelashes fluttering. And that'll *definitely* be too noticeable tomorrow, but he isn't sure how to care.

"Of course, princess," Dream purrs.

George ignores the rush the name gives him, fingertips finding the button of Dream's jeans.

Chapter End Notes

Everybody say oh no.

Hello! Thank you for the support on the first chapter, I'm loving writing this so I'm excited for what's to come :) I decided I'm going to try to update weekly but I also just started school so we'll see. Follow me on Twitter if you want, I post snippets & stuff, @yungluvXD

Thank you for reading! xo

To Hedonism

Chapter Summary

It's not a first date.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

From where George sits, cradled by soft pillows, his dumb idea is at least a work of art. Dream's gorgeous fingers travel with grace as they button up his shirt, and he watches his own reflection cover up clues of the sinful affair. Polished and vaguely tanned skin steadily disappears behind sheer fabric. His cheeks are flushed, hair astray though that's the next thing he fixes into place. George traces each movement with guilty eyes hidden beneath a canopy of dark lashes.

He's beautiful. And George can still feel the weight of his lips cutting into skin.

"Maybe don't tell them about this one," George says lowly.

Dream sends him a sideways glance, eyes simple, merciful. "Sure," he murmurs. There's a careful pause, and then he's adding, "Why?"

George tucks the corner of his lip between his teeth, eyes turning away. "Just...too many questions."

Dream reaches for his shoes, begins toeing them on. "Our little secret, then," he hums at an attempt to lighten the black room. George feels something like unease bleed into his veins.

His gaze falls to the hem of his shorts, a dazed thumb beginning to follow the thread.

"George," Dream asks. George glances up again and Dream's features are unsure, maybe pained. "This was okay?"

"Yeah," George answers quickly, slightly breathless, "Yeah, of course."

Dream's frown doesn't ease and George feels the guilt wash in louder, this time for a different reason. "You sure?"

"I'm sure," George answers.

The creases in Dream's face smooth out, though his eyes remain gentle. "It feels like something's wrong."

George exhales, gaze falling. "No, I just...I told myself it wouldn't happen again. And now..." he shrugs, "It's embarrassing, is all."

"Being with me is embarrassing?"

"Giving in to myself is embarrassing."

George's mind had stormed with so many warnings during each moment that led up to this. He'd

swept them all aside in favor of Dream's touch. Recklessly abandoned the careful logic he so often followed.

"I don't get it," Dream prods.

George doodles a pattern in the sheets with the tip of his finger, "I already told you this was a bad idea."

Dream falls silent which has George looking up again, finding flat lips. He watches George with simple thought, holding his words and his caution under consideration. Then his lips twist up slightly, a blue smile.

Dream grabs his jacket from the foot of the bed, George following the hand that reaches for it. "See you later, George," he says.

He turns away, jacket tucked within his palm, and heads for the door. George looks to the wall, hearing metal slide from the lock and wood drift open. He waits for footsteps to fade away.

"Sapnap."

Wide eyes leap to the door, landing on the boy just beyond it.

"Dream," Sapnap echoes, brows lowered.

His eyes are accusing, boring into Dream's flaring cheeks and acrylic eyes. George's stomach swirls.

"You're home early," Dream tries, voice unsteady. Sapnap stares.

"No I'm not."

"Oh. Well," Dream clears his throat, "I was actually just heading out. So...nice seeing you."

"Yeah," Sapnap answers dully, eyes drifting past Dream's shoulder to where George sits on the bed, *shirtless*.

Dream sends Sapnap a tight smile and a short nod before he's stepping into the hall, leaving George to deal with the mess. George watches bitterly where he disappears down the lasting corridor, wishing he'd done that the first time.

The door slides shut and George falls back into his pillows, hand clamped over his forehead.

"Sapnap—"

"Care to explain?"

George clenches his jaw at his tone, can feel the scorching gaze through his palm. He tears his hand away from his face, pleading, "It's not what you think."

Sapnap's eyes narrow, flicking downward briefly. "Cute mark."

George spares a glance toward his raw bitten skin, "Listen—"

"I'm gonna be honest, I don't know if this is the smartest thing you could've done, George," Sapnap mutters, tugging his jacket off and letting it fall over his bed.

"It's not that big of a deal," George attempts to mend. He receives a scoff as Sapnap flicks the lamp on, yellow light spilling over their skin.

He's soon by George's side and his fingers close around the blanket that reaches just below George's collarbones. It's torn away.

"Really?"

"Sapnap, oh my *god*," George hisses. He drapes the blanket back over bruise-painted skin, glowering.

Sapnap's features scrunch up, still lingering on his torso even through the barrier, "Seriously, George, what'd he do to you?"

"Knock it off," George mutters. Sapnap merely rolls his eyes, turning away. George exhales a bit of the flames and nerves scraping his lungs. "Sapnap, I'm serious this time," he begs, "Don't tell the others."

Sapnap huffs a laugh, "You think you can hide that from them?"

"*Please.* "

He sighs, feet dragging toward the bathroom. "Whatever, I won't say anything."

He's stolen by the other room, disappearing beyond the wall. George scowls, eyes wilting toward his stomach. When he shifts the blanket, he can see an array of scarlet strokes, can feel the bite of lips.

They roamed across white, pure skin like it was something to worship. Like coating it in the abuse of his mouth, like melting George's breaths into something heavy and syrupy, like leaving the beat of his lashes sharp and uneven would save him from damnation. Dream has never failed to make his toes curl.

Would it be so bad, to want it again? It could just be simple fun. They could keep it within walls, under light dark enough to stow it in secrecy, and go home and pretend like it never happened. It could be safe if they're careful enough.

It's a dumb idea, but Dream's lips feel *good*. And his hands are so gentle as his mouth works, cradling his canvas.

It's a bad idea, George knows. He wonders what Sapnap knows.

He's soon slipping out from under the covers and hovering in the doorway of the bathroom, running water pounding at his ears. The milk light that wears at his skin reminds him of what he'd promised himself only hours ago. Somewhere in the back of his mind, he knew it'd never last.

"I don't get why it's such a big deal," George asks.

Sapnap lifts his head from the sink, sparing George a glance before he's shutting the faucet off. "Put a shirt on."

George rolls his eyes, wrapping his arms around his stomach instead. "Why are you freaking out?"

Sapnap sighs. His hands curl around the cold counter as the worry slips from his lips. "I just think friends and romance shouldn't mix," he says lowly.

George scoffs. "This is neither of those things," he defends, "It's not like I like him."

Sapnap pauses, lips flat. His eyes tug at George's skin unforgivingly. "You're still in the same circle," Sapnap says, "And I happen to like our circle."

"Nothing's going to change, Sap," George promises, "And it's not going to happen again."

"That's what you said the first time."

George swallows, eyes flicking away briefly, "Well—"

"Somewhere down the road, he's gonna come crawling back," Sapnap declares, "And you won't be able to say no."

George's brows lower, "That's not true."

"He gets under your skin too easily," Sapnap warns, though at this point it's more of a reminder.

"You make me sound like an idiot," George answers grimly.

Sapnap sighs and pushes off the counter, his fingertip sending the lightswitch downward as he wanders through the doorway again. George watches the white light fade, lets the new darkness pouring over his front settle on his bruises. The promise he'd made to himself was pried away by Dream's ruinous lips. Of course Sapnap's right.

"I'm just looking out for you," Sapnap says.

George turns away from the slick ebony room, eyes landing where Sapnap tugs the window open. Crisp air floods in as well as the melody of cars rushing through the city that never sleeps. The cold air bites at George's bare skin and the sound pierces his ears.

"I'll be fine," he answers sourly.

Sapnap turns again, reprimand laced within his eyes. "Okay," he dares, "That one time that he came over early, how long were you guys here for before I got back?"

George glares, hard eyes puncturing Sapnap's skin while his stomach folds. "What are you talking about," he mutters.

"Come *on*, George. You think I didn't notice? I got a headache from the fucking tension."

George clenches his jaw, feels the heat of a palm on his hip and the drag of fingertips down his neck. He digs his fingernails into his side.

Sapnap arches a brow, "How long?"

"I don't know," George grumbles, "Ten, fifteen minutes?"

"Fifteen minutes is all it took. Fifteen minutes and he had you right where he wanted you. He had you willing."

George says nothing, writhing quietly because it's the truth he wanted desperately to avoid.

Sapnap shrugs at his silence, "You can do what you want, George. All I'm saying is be careful."

He turns away, burying his disapproving eyes in the dresser. His words scathe George's skin, turn

crimson bruises purple. The final ones turn them black.

"I can't say I see this ending well."

-

He listens to Dream's voice in school, another accident. It's not his fault his mind always wanders toward dark hours and ardent words. Literary devices aren't captivating enough.

The vinyl plays again and again in his head, each time burning him worse than the last until his fingertips are numb from the layers of scars. He drags his thumb over the corner of his page mindlessly, willing the time to pass so he can find solace in his room again.

So far this class, he's learned how to sort the pros and cons of giving in to destruction. Though one side drips with heavy warnings, the one with barely half as many lines is much more alluring. The rich letters that curl through his mind tempt him.

So when a ring jolts him from his thoughts, he's more than happy to slip piles of stationary into his bag, tuck his textbook under his arm, and start toward the door. While his jaw is wired with tension his irises bleed tar, every flaring desire seeping to the surface. And it's either his fucking luck or Dream's inability to keep himself away that has George sinking deeper.

When he meets the cold air, he hopes it'll scrape some of the burns from his skin. That is until his eyes drift, expecting to find any other student on the bench, though of fucking *course* it's only Dream. He glances up just as George's gaze reaches him, eyes touched by clemency and lips rose, and as George's feet begin to start faster over the pavement he can't help but note that while everything else about Dream always seems put together—collars almost always hugging his neck, clean jewelry gracing flawless skin—his hair is only ever a jagged mess. Though of course he makes it work.

The boy hastily rises from his seat, catching up to George easily. George merely glares at the road ahead of him; ginger trees, taunting buildings, and somber skies.

"Are you stalking me, now?" he asks sharply. When he walks even faster, Dream keeps up without effort, and George finds that inconvenient.

"Not exactly," he receives.

"Please tell me this is a coincidence."

At that, Dream's lips fall blank. George glances at him briefly, his brutal eyes daring Dream to spill his admission.

"What do you want," George mutters as his gaze leaves bronzed skin.

"I thought we could hang out," Dream answers.

George runs his tongue over the back of his teeth, tasting the pungent memory of unsinkable want. "I already told you that was it."

"What?"

"That was the last time."

Dream scoffs, tearing the thick textbook from George's grip to tuck it within his own palm, "I mean actually hang out."

George spares him a wary glance, "Why?"

"Why?" Dream echoes.

"We've never done that before."

Dream exhales steadily building frustration, "I just think it's been a bit difficult to get to know each other. With you hating me and all."

"So?" George answers sourly.

"So now's our chance."

"Still not following *why* that's necessary—"

He's tugged backward by the fingers pressed to his wrist, finding that Dream's feet have stilled against the silver pavement. His eyes are hopeful, jade wearing a pleading melody.

"We'd have fun together," Dream says gently, breaths quiet but still weighted, "We'd get along if you just got to know me."

George says nothing, carefully watching the emotion that lights Dream's irises. Even with each blink of dark lashes, the look doesn't wear away.

Dream swallows, fingertips falling from George's wrist as he shifts on his feet. "There's a really nice cafe downtown that I think you'd like," he offers, "We could go grab a cup of coffee."

Oh.

"Is this a date?"

Dream's gaze turns watchful. "No," he answers sternly, and when George arches a brow at him he rolls his eyes, "Why can't we just spend time together as friends?"

George sends him a look, stealing his book back, "Because we've hooked up twice."

He turns away and starts on his path again, sights set on the closed walls of his dorm. He hears footsteps shuffle after him.

"Just give me this one chance," Dream asks lowly, "I know we haven't talked much outside of our group, and when we do I'm sort of a dick to you," George huffs a bitter laugh, "But I think we could be good friends. And if you don't change your mind after today, I'll...I'll leave you alone."

George folds the request over and over again in his mind, wondering where this could lead him.

"You want to be friends?"

If he'd end today waving a simple goodbye to mellow eyes and letting cushioned walls catch him, or slipping fabric from broad shoulders and etching warm skin with his fingerprints.

"I do."

George falls silent, stumped, which is a frustrating realization because usually, he can always differentiate right from wrong and usually he follows the first option.

"I'll show you a good time," Dream sways, "You'll have fun, I promise."

"And if I don't?"

Dream hesitates, though of course the words he finds are vulgar, "I'll give you a blowjob."

George throws him a hard glare, finding eyes touched by amusement in the process, and his feet start faster once again.

"I'm kidding, I'm kidding," Dream rushes, catching the crook of George's elbow and stopping him in place for a second time. George faces him hesitantly.

Dream stares down at him with the same wishful look swallowing his irises. It's childlike imploring within the foliage, doe eyes dragging George toward the answer Dream hopes for.

"Just today, George."

His name leaves his tongue so softly, cushioned by pretty pink lips, turned into a euphony. George swallows, eyes flicking toward the door only a few feet away, the one that welcomes him home. The one that screams safety.

Dream towers higher, begging eyes and black lips that scream danger. That read *I could make you want me, all I have to do is try*.

George can hear the sirens already.

"Let me put my stuff down," he murmurs.

Dream's eyes alight with graceful delight and he just barely nods. The simple smile that vaguely twists his lips upward tugs on George's heart. The hand wrapped around his elbow falls away, Dream taking a small step backward.

George's feet drag him away without another word, the staccato of his heart swelling just a bit faster.

The track lays empty. No headlights show sign of life within the shadowed tunnel, the sign that they wait for. George isn't exactly patient where his soles press to the platform, unsure how to fill the silence. Dream seems at ease, though, not in need of polite conversation to lace them together.

George stares at the tile wall ahead of him, willing the railroad to fill so he can be rid of their mocking glare.

"Do you ride the subway often?" Dream asks kindly.

George glances up at him, finding Dream's eyes already set on him when he does, "Yeah, I mean. Often enough."

Dream nods, a thin strand of hair falling into his eyes in the process, "You seem anxious." When George pauses, turns away again, he adds, "Or is that just because of me?"

George sighs, the hiss of an engine drawing his eyes toward one end of the tunnel. "I wouldn't say

I'm anxious."

"Then what would you say?"

Narrow doors settle in front of them, not a moment later slipping open.

"Skeptical."

A low laugh escapes Dream's lips. It's velvet, daunting. Wordlessly, he steps onto the car, George following after.

It holds passengers already, though not many. The two land on a seat in the corner and instantly Dream draws something from his pocket. It's a coil of wire, one that he begins untangling with quick fingers, and George watches. One headphone is extended toward him not a moment later.

His eyes light with curiosity and confusion at the offer, "What're we listening to?"

They trail upward, lock with Dream's and a smile sneaks across the boy's lips. "There's a song that lines up perfectly with the amount of time it takes to get downtown," he says, voice sweetened with wonder.

George takes the headphone, brows lowered softly as he slots it into his ear, "How long does it take to get downtown, again?"

"Fifteen minutes, twenty-two seconds."

"How could a song be that long," George murmurs.

Dream's fingertips begin to dance over his glowing screen.

"Guess some musicians just have a lot to say."

George frowns at his feet before glancing up again. Dream's eyes wander from the screen to meet George's, warm and welcoming and reflecting a sliver of milky light from his phone. His lips lie in a simple line, skin easy and cut by high cheekbones.

"You're a music major?" George half-asks.

The corners of Dream's lips invade his cheeks, the rich grin breathtaking. "That's how you know you can trust me."

George's eyes fall away once more, lingering on the broad smile for maybe a moment. The doors swiftly close and as the train begins winding through its underground path, music starts curling through George's ears.

When the first notes trickle in and George hears piano, his brows dip low over startled eyes. It's a raw melody of the instrument, only the string of notes. They're lonely for a long moment until it slowly builds, reaching George's mind in an array of color.

Indigo and ebon bleed together, sing a sorrowful tune though it's mixed with pixie dust, a bit of hope. Consistent, smiling, and dignified chords build a structure to such complex emotions.

"What do you think?" Dream murmurs.

"I..." George searches for the right thing to say, a quick drag of notes springing in his ear, "I don't usually listen to music like this."

"You mean classical?"

The theme swells, becoming grander. "Yeah."

He falls quiet for a moment, letting graceful harmonies bloom through the speaker.

"Do you listen to this every time you're going downtown?" he wonders.

"I do," Dream hums, "And sometimes when I'm not."

"And you don't grow tired of it?" George finds his lips asking.

"I notice something new every time, how could I?" Dream answers. "Like, listen," his fingertip settles on the back of George's hand, the one curled in on itself and resting on his thigh, "Here, it ascends. Once," he draws a line across George's knuckles as the piano sings a scale, "Twice," another line, "Three times, all slowly," and then a third. Then his finger brushes in the opposite direction, corresponding with the song as the notes grow lower, "And then it descends quickly. And I wonder what the composer was trying to convey."

Dream's hand falls back into his lap. George stares at the skin where Dream marked the patterns in the song, can still feel each note there.

"And what do you think he was trying to convey," George asks.

Dream hums in careful contemplation, "How fast things can change. How one day you could have everything, and the next day it could be gone, lost in a heartbeat." There's a pause, George embedding the words into the music and hearing it fit, until Dream says, "Or maybe it's the opposite."

"The opposite?" George echoes.

"Maybe it's having nothing, and then everything."

"Then why would it ascend and then descend?"

"Maybe it's the ascent of loss, of emptiness, the overwhelming urge to give up," Dream depicts and the song mirrors withered flowers, "And then something lets that all fade away."

Burgundy petals flourish into scarlet. George exhales.

They fall silent for the rest of the ride. The wires that snake up their sides, kiss collarbones, and blossom music within their ears lace them together. And fifteen minutes and twenty-two seconds later when the train stills and the doors creep open, it all wilts into quiet.

The table for two makes it feel rather similar to a date. The small table and lone chairs press them close together, intimacy clinging to their cheeks in crimson afterglow.

The cafe smells sweet, the air carrying a perfume of cinnamon, vanilla, and coffee. It's warm, too, with dim amber light, spruce furniture, and cream walls. George finds it perfectly lovely.

Ceramic mugs settle before them and George watches the steam rise, letting the air swallow enough of the drink's heat before he takes a sip.

"This is cute," he says, eyeing the surrounding room, "How come you've never suggested it to the

group before?"

Dream watches him for a steady moment, gaze opalescent and clinging to George's face. Then he huffs a small laugh and his eyes fall, "I've actually never been here."

George frowns gently, "How'd you find out about it, then?"

Dream shakes his head at the drink he cups in his hands, "Looked up cafes in our area."

George's eyes light and he bites back the grin that nearly crawls across his lips. He nods slowly, witnesses Dream's cheeks bloom red and his own heart stutter. He lifts his mug once again to mask the amusement.

"So," Dream murmurs, George peering at him from over the rim, "You're an English major, right?"

George's auburn painted lips bare a small smile as he sets the coffee down, "Yeah, I am."

His eyes flick down to the finger that restlessly—*nervously*—taps against the ivory walls of Dream's mug and his smile softens along with his eyes.

"What kind of things do you do, then?" Dream asks, "I'm curious about literature."

"Well, one of my classes is just analyzing literature. And I take a creative writing class, that's probably the one that takes up most of my time. But it's also the one I'm most interested in."

Dream nods. "What do you write about?"

"Lots of things," George answers, "It is a creative writing class, so we try different topics. Right now, the paper I'm working on is an open prompt, so we get to come up with our own topic."

"And what'd you decide on?"

George crosses his ankles as he takes a steady pause. "I actually chose to write about our friends."

Dream's irises brighten, "Really?"

George hums.

"You write about me, then?"

George lets out an airy laugh, "Not yet. I've only just started." Dream nods, eyes intently devouring each word. "What makes you so curious about literature?" George asks.

Dream purses his lips as he puts his words together, cites his thoughts, "It's pretty similar to music, they're very interconnected. I think music could say as much as a book. I mean, song lyrics are just poetry with a catchy tune." George huffs a gentle laugh, Dream's eyes seemingly glimmering at that. A bit of his nerves smooth out. "Or maybe it's just because of you."

George rolls his eyes, "Great, I thought you were being genuine."

He receives a devilish look from easy eyes, "I was. I just like messing with you."

"That's a bad habit," George answers.

"I don't think so."

George lifts the mug to his lips again, the scent of pumpkin settling on warmed skin. "Of course you wouldn't."

Dream shrugs, expression still light and amused, "I've been doing it for years."

George glances down at the layer of foam blocking dark coffee as the mug lands on the table again. He tears his hands away from the heat radiating off the sides, tucking his fist under his chin. "Sure, but I've only just found out what your hands feel like."

It's a fingertip dipped in the water, rippling the surface. When he looks up again he finds listening, sticky eyes and lips set flat. Sharp cheekbones and the tip of Dream's nose are glittered by interest and the kind lighting.

"Hm."

George bites back a shameless smile, raising his eyebrows instead in feigned question. Dream's arm unfolds from the other, fingertip beginning to ever so slowly stripe the skin from George's wrist to his elbow.

"What?" George asks.

Dream watches his own hand, eyes faintly blazing. "You're flipping it," he answers, igniting thin skin, "I thought you were the one so insistent that this remain platonic."

"If you're just gonna flirt with me, then there's no point."

A small smile threatens the composed state of Dream's lips, "Oh, I'm flirting with you?" His touch fades away, George already missing the contact though he doesn't dare show it. "I've barely said anything out of line."

"Why'd you take me to this cafe, Dream? Really."

"Why did you let me?" Dream challenges. When George says nothing, a frown turning his features bitter, Dream adds, "You clearly think it means something more. So why'd you agree to come?"

"I didn't think it'd be more until you made it more," George defends.

Dream shakes his head, eyes all-knowing and George despises them. Always elegant and always serene and always pinning George down. Dream leans back in his seat, folds his arms over his chest, "Did you tell Sapnap where you were going?"

George swallows, lies, "He wasn't there."

Dream smiles vaguely, irises aflame, "We were texting before you even got there. You lied to him, I took that as a sign." George clenches his jaw, Dream simply lifting his drink to let it slip through wicked lips. "I'm not the villain, here," he says.

"Sapnap doesn't like us hanging out," George tries.

Dream seems unaffected by that, though still he asks, "Why not?"

George pauses, tracing the steam on the side of his mug. "He doesn't think we can be just friends," he answers simply.

"Do *you* think we can be just friends?"

The question crawls down George's spine coldly. The toe of a thick black boot nudges the inside of his ankle.

"Admit it, George. You like sneaking around with me. You like being with me, being touched by me."

George exhales the cold as heat scrapes his veins. It burns deliciously.

Dream's voice drips lower, face bare of any expression. "You've already admitted that my hands make you feel good. Do you like my hands more, or my lips?"

It's the inevitable descent into what held them so close a few nights ago, and what held them down in the backseat of Dream's car. George had given in just so he could enjoy this, relish in the feeling of being torn apart.

"Both," he whispers.

Where he expects a sinister, triumphant grin Dream's lips remain in a simple line. He blinks languidly, sits up in his chair once again. He leans over the table as his hand reaches toward the one curled around porcelain. It's pried away, Dream's gaze set on his own finger as it lazily dances over the patterns in George's palm.

"I'd settle for friends if that's what you wanted," he declares with finality, "But you brought up my hands, so I'm guessing you wanted that used against you."

George doesn't give answer to the quiet question. Instead, he lets the drink on the table run cold as he watches a silent message be scratched into his skin. It's a taunt, the prophecy of his demise. And it settles somewhere more permanent, slithers beneath his skin and is etched into his bones.

Dream will always be a few steps ahead of him. Will always be able to read him and have him at his mercy. And George finds that just a bit terrifying.

Dream had insisted on walking him all the way to his door. George can't help but find bubbly content in someone wanting to do that for him.

He also can't help but find content in the fact that Dream had wanted to spend time with him so badly. Had looked for a place to take George, a place George would enjoy. And that he wanted George to talk about himself, just so that Dream could know him a little better.

Their conversation had descended into something kinder, something simpler. It was mostly made of Dream asking questions and George giving answers. Dream listened intently, held George's gaze with sweet eyes and smiled as George spoke. George tried not to stumble over his words, distracted by the boy's genuine interest and gorgeous features.

Dream made him feel wanted. And George decided that he shouldn't feel guilty for wanting that.

So he took the leather jacket from Dream's shoulders after the second time of being offered, even though it swallowed him whole. And on the subway ride home when Dream slipped his hand into George's, George said nothing and instead let the spike in his heart speak for him. And when Dream said that he would walk George up to his dorm George let him.

The crush of soles against the floor is the only sound between them and it reverberates off the walls, a pitiful reminder that though they could pretend in the climate of a quaint cafe, they're not

exactly friends. Have been the opposite for as long as they've known each other. That conversation isn't exactly effortless.

George stops before his door finally, the silence heavy on his shoulders. When he glances sideways Dream is leaned against the frame, shoulder pressed to it. His pupils reek tar that spills into his irises.

"Thanks," George says carefully, breaking the quiet, "For this. I know I give you a hard time, but I appreciate you trying."

A light smile touches Dream's lips and he shrugs, "I probably deserve it."

George only nods and the weight of Dream's gaze stitches smoke within his skin. He swallows, fingers curling around the edge just below the collar of the jacket he wears, "Do you want your jacket back?"

As he begins prying the fabric away from his figure Dream merely breathes a small laugh, lips pulling higher. "It's fine," he answers.

George eyes him though nevertheless lets his hand fall. Dream's simple silence remains and pounds at George's skull.

"Okay. Well, bye."

"Bye," Dream murmurs warmly.

George's eyes linger but soon enough he faces the door again. The image of Dream, freckles crafted from sunrays and lips licked by liquor, is swapped for plain, smooth wood. He's ready to disappear into where the absence of Dream's dangerous gaze lies. Leave the boy behind without another silent declaration between them.

Though while one hand reaches for the doorknob, fingers curl around the one that lays limp by his side. And George is tugged away from security.

The exhale of Dream's breath against his lips is all it takes, leaves him hazy and without another thought, George lifts onto his toes and molds his empty hand around Dream's jaw. He slots their lips together dumbly, sucks Dream's mouth raw. Dream follows and *god* his kiss feels better than George remembers. Maybe because this one's less urgent, this one Dream can sigh into and drag out.

Strawberry and syrupy lips leave George's mind a puddle. His fingers clutch tighter around Dream's knuckles just to ground himself, maybe ask Dream closer. Dream's hand reaches up to fist the dark leather by George's waist.

The single drag of George's tongue against the roof of Dream's mouth is calculated. As he pulls away, falls back onto his heels, sharp teeth scrape over Dream's lips.

It's a kiss that screams *think of me*.

Without another glance in Dream's direction—though he can certainly feel the one that scathes him—George's fingers curl around brass, will his room into view. And as he steps inside, wipes his glossy mouth and the threat of a smile that lays there away with the back of his hand, George leaves the forbidden night behind him.

He starts toward his bed. When he begins tearing the leather away from his shoulders George

finally spares a look toward Sapnap, who watches him accusingly. George exhales and leaves the jacket at the foot of his bed as his eyes find the bathroom door.

"I don't even want to talk about it," he mutters.

Chapter End Notes

Woahhh hey guys.

Thank you for reading! I hope you enjoyed this chapter, leave comments/kudos if you want, they are greatly appreciated :) I always love hearing your guys' thoughts and I'm super excited for what's to come ;)

Follow me on Twitter for fun stuff, @yungluvXD

xoxo

Habit

Chapter Summary

"Once is chance, twice is coincidence, three times is a pattern."

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Worn away by days of reflection, George finds a bit of remedy in the song. He latches onto each note and lets them drag him toward some sort of balance.

Where the fuck is he going with this, is probably his most recurrent wondering. George has no idea. Dream had, for the most part, acted as normal in the days following their date. He held back some witty comments, George noticed, because they were sparser than usual. And Dream respected a platonic barrier between them, keeping their secret because they were never alone together in those days. Always around the lingering eyes of their friends.

So George never got answers. There's no "what are we" talk when you've hooked up with your not-exactly-friend twice and went on a half-date with him because there's no answer to that question. No one knows what they are. So George's mind runs wild.

And the one thing he could turn to, the very thing that drew a thin line connecting them, was the fucking song.

He'd been sat atop his bed, screen bleaching his eyes, the first time the idea struck him. He scrolled through rows upon rows of music files and when the sound of bare piano finally swelled in his ears, it hit him harder than it should've.

It settled in a pit in his stomach, baby blue staccato and the memory of Dream's fingertips grazing his palm, a silent question, and when George opened his curled fist quietly they danced higher and wrapped around his knuckles. He'd felt it heavy in his heart, the saccharine gesture. And his heart dragged him to the ocean floor.

It's a beautiful song. George had convinced himself that was all.

So he listened to it in class when all that could reach him was the memory of Dream's lips biting into his skin and George sinking into the mattress and he just needed a little control. Or when whirring thoughts led to insomnia, not even the sapphire breeze from the window able to wilt his eyes shut.

Even now, where they all sit slumped over laptops and digging into textbooks, and the only thing that'll keep George's eyes from drifting is giving himself over to the faucet of daisy notes. It bleeds into his skull like an anthem now.

He drills graphite into his paper, hugged by the shelves upon shelves of book spines that watch him. It rains again today, graphite skies to match his scribbled letters. And when Sapnap's eyes lift for the first time since he opened his notebook and find the wires crawling up George's front, he reaches forward without a second thought.

"What're you listening to?" he asks. George just watches as the bud is plucked from his ear, assuming that'll serve as answer enough. And it does, Sapnap stuffing it into his own ear and his features scrunching up at the instrument, "Wow, you really are an old soul. Who listens to classical?"

He receives shushing from nearby tables and a wide-eyed stare from George, who, as the item lands back in his palm, notices another pair of eyes lift in his peripheral. He ignores it and instead disappears into his headphones again, this time with a clenched jaw. He's only granted a few blissful moments before the inevitable ping has dread dripping down his spine.

He glances at the glowing screen and vows to leave Sapnap with a broken ankle.

You liked the song?

George's face remains blank as he types.

Different classical song.

He doesn't dare look up, nor does he let anything seep onto his face.

Really?

Which one?

Beethoven.

Brilliant.

George glares at the line of messages. He peeks up at the seat a few feet ahead of him and finds an ivy smile spread wide across the boy's face.

Stop smiling.

Do you listen to it often?

No.

I don't even know what you're talking about.

Can I sit next to you?

George's thumbs falter though when his mind settles they print out the letters quickly.

No.

You've been keeping your distance lately, comes his response. George scowls.

No I haven't.

You have.

Do you wish I wouldn't?

He glares at the device tucked within his palm, backed into a corner.

Why do you always do this.

What'd I do?

Lure me into your traps.

He hears a muted chuckle and glances up. Dream's eyes find him only a moment later, lit with amusement. George shakes his head as he holds back his own smile.

His gaze falls again, jade eyes printed into his mind.

You make it too easy.

*Are you doing it on purpose, George asks.
Keeping your distance.*

And why would I do that?

The idea echoes itself and George recites it onto the keyboard.

*You want me to miss you.
To seek you out.*

The screen is silent for a moment.

That's funny.

He exhales something like relief, inhales anticipation.

*No.
I just thought you wanted to keep it secret.*

George's eyes linger on the "it", nearly set it aflame.

*Oh.
Yeah.*

Did you have fun the other day?

No.

*You know what's funny?
I know there's debate about the first one, but our second and third kisses were both initiated by
you.*

George's eyes narrow.

*That's hilarious.
Good thing the first one counts for more.*

Agree to disagree.

You're an ass.

Can I sit next to you?

No.

George finds himself suffocating a smile. The thrill that comes with talking to Dream rushes through his veins, an addictive nectar. Blue blooms into purple through the wires, melting like wax

in George's mind.

*I'm all lonely over here.
Come sit on my lap.*

George's face heats.

Shut up.

The mere thought of it kindles a sapphire flame within his ribcage, bones left to blacken. Pinning Dream's hips down and fingerprints slipping beneath his shirt. The pale glow of canvas stains George's eyes, welcomes raven vowels that he traces tentatively.

*But you looked so pretty the first time.
I loved just watching you lose yourself.*

He stares at the screen bitterly, lungs suddenly heavy. When Dream receives no response he merely continues on.

*You fit so perfectly in my lap.
I love the way you feel.*

George exhales a caramelized breath, hesitantly admits *me too*. The letters scar his fingertips, sugarcoated and heated memories glazing his eyes.

*Yeah?
I wish I could feel you right now. You look so pretty when you're nervous.*

George glares, *I'm not nervous*.

Then why are you being short?

You caught me off guard.

You're red.

Stop looking at me.

Let's get out of here, Dream proposes.

*Are you kidding?
You think they wouldn't catch on?*

*Come on.
I want to touch you.*

Don't say that.

The breaths that fill his chest are thick, get stuck in his throat and George is left light-headed. His veins are plagued by weeping wishes.

It's cute how easily affected you are.

If I said that to you, would you not be? George lets the desire seep from aching fingertips onto the page. *If I said I wanted that.*

Wanted what, Dream prods, and the words taste scarlet on George's tongue. He can hear Dream's velvet baritone lulling his eyes shut. Stealing the truth.

Your touch.

He chews on his lip, *right now*.

Silence varnishes the screen. George dares to look up but the thing he hopes to find—bruised and bruising irises—is out of sight. Dark lashes are posed as a shield from lowered eyes, ones locked on the phone. Even when the roar of pages snapping shut and Karl's voice sound, George's gaze remains on Dream, who merely finds the boy breaking the quiet with simple eyes.

"You guys wanna get out of here," Karl asks, releasing a heavy exhale, "I've had enough studenting for the day."

Dream's eyes slide over to George, still bare of any telling emotion and there's no clever smile, either. His gaze leaves quick enough, though, along with a short, "Sure."

As Dream rises from his seat, the spines of two other books wilt shut. George blinks, remembering his own, and reaches to start stuffing his bag full again.

"You have anywhere in mind?" Quackity inquires.

Karl simply shrugs. "We'll find something."

The back wall of the library is soon empty again as the group starts down the road, ink puddles settled in their path. While the few people ahead of him have umbrellas to catch the rain, George walks with a vacant hand, only his hood to protect him. He takes the barely-there privacy gladly, hopes the jewels of rain seep through fabric and bone and wash out his mind.

Hopes the warmth of his pocket melts away the warning engraved into his palm because while he tries his best to scrub the thoughts away, George always finds his way back to Dream. If he stole the boy's hand right now and tore him away from the group, if he let ivy fingertips slip beneath his shirt and char his skin, if desperation was embedded into the red of his lips from Dream's own. And he tries to fight it. Until the boy is right beside him.

Belittling rain wearing at his jacket is swapped for silence. George glances to the side, finds ornamented knuckles clutching around the curved end of an umbrella gracefully. His focus shifts to the one who owns them. Frost-kissed freckles, defenseless eyes, and the hair that frames them lightly grazed by the weather.

George laughs faintly, muses, "What a gentleman." The smile it receives from heart-shaped lips is breathtaking, pure though gentle delight. It's soft enough to not part the seam of his lips. George looks away.

"You don't have an umbrella?" Dream asks.

George tears his hood away to let matted hair spring free. He drags his fingers through the disordered strands. "I shared with Sapnap."

Dream hums, "Why aren't you with him now?"

George shrugs, traces evergreen trees and the ones scorched amber under the influence of autumn. The array is occasionally interrupted by silver street lights and faraway buildings. He braids cables of rain with his eyes until they hit black pavement and burst.

"We should go to Central Park," George mumbles to no one in particular. He lifts a hand, lets water curl around his slender fingers, "It's pretty in the rain."

There's a steady pause and George assumes Dream won't answer, or maybe just didn't hear him. But then the boy is clearing his throat and calling to the group, "You guys want to go to Central Park?"

George glances at the boy briefly, eyes quick to slide over the faces that have now turned toward them instead. Dream receives a few simple nods before they're turning away again. Sapnap's gaze, however, lingers, drifts away from Dream to scathe George's skin warily. Though the look doesn't last long, George still holds his breath.

"He still doesn't approve?" Dream murmurs.

George swallows, turns away again. The pulse of rain shatters his brief silence. "He's just being a good friend," George answers.

"And what does that entail?" Dream asks lowly, voice sweetened.

"He's worried."

"Sapnap knows I would never hurt you," he says. It's daunting, spoken like the words escaped from a cavern. But its undertones are warm, a hint of hazelnut on Dream's tongue.

George glances at the boy and just as he does, Dream's swapping the umbrella into his other hand. Before the rain has a chance to touch George, he's pulled into Dream's side by an arm snaked around his waist and a palm stuck to his side.

George glares up at him, especially at the self-satisfied smile that splits Dream's face. George's fingers smother the ones that hold him and promptly tug them away.

"Nice try," he mutters, leaning over to steal the umbrella from Dream's grip. He holds it above his own head, leaving Dream's to catch the rain itself.

Dream exclaims a complaint, makes an attempt to steal it back. George just holds it away as he watches water pour over the boy's face.

It leaves his hair even more of a mess than before, falls down the spaces in between his freckles. Crystallized dewdrops kiss the tip of his nose and his cupid's bow, and get caught in the web of his lashes. His skin is ivory, but the apples of his cheeks and cushion of his lips are scarlet-bitten. And all George can think is the boy looks like he'd been written by acrylic notes and warm harmonies.

George's feet still against soaked pavement as his eyes find the group ahead of them. He counts their steps.

"Why are you stopping?" Dream asks, his soles nevertheless mirroring George's.

George's gaze is retrained on him. He passes the umbrella back into the boy's hand, "Was letting them walk ahead," takes a step closer. Dream's eyes turn from youthful delight to rich molasses, watchful. George's jaw inclines as Dream is mindlessly drawn closer. The weight of his pupils' burns. George inhales the scent of vanilla. "Our secret, right?" he asks simply, eyes following his own thumb as it scrapes the edge of Dream's jaw.

Then they light with something clever, teasing, meeting Dream's where they remain drunken. Dream falls for it, breaths weighted as he slips closer.

The taste of smoke and ebon on Dream's lips is as enticing as it is menacing. It juxtaposes the lazy drag of his mouth, how each kiss melts together and pools sugar and heat low in George's stomach. And with the way Dream's eyes fall softly shut, giving all to feeling, it's like he may melt, too. It's a wonder the umbrella hasn't slipped through his fingers. Doused them in purity.

When George leaves the gratifying touch behind, placing a final and small kiss on the corner of Dream's mouth, he sticks the tip of his forefinger into Dream's chest. "Fourth one was you."

The boy steps away, covers his head once again with the hood of his jacket, and starts toward the group with caramel eyes and candy-apple lips.

The rain has stopped by the time they get to Central Park. And even though the grass still has raindrops clinging to its veins, they sprawl out across it.

George finds himself on the opposite side of the circle to the boy he just kissed, the one he tries not to look at for fear he won't be able to look away. Dream holds an ivory cigarette between his fingers, occasionally sticks it between rose lips and embers will flash within the paper. When he sucks the end his cheekbones sharpen and when he exhales smoke his eyes mellow further. For the most part, George keeps his eyes on the sky.

His head lays atop Sappnap's lap, gaze noting the shape of charcoal clouds.

"If I die," Sappnap murmurs, "You fucking owe me."

"What?" George sputters

Sappnap presses his palms into the grass behind him, leans back on them. The pale blue blanket overhead encircles his jaw, one spot of ash resting just above his head and drawing a halo.

"Tell your lover to get off my back," he says, voice still low.

"What are you talking about?"

"Your boyfriend keeps sending me dirty looks," he mutters.

George glares even though the look won't reach Sappnap's line of sight. "What does this have to do with me," he answers bitterly.

"You're the idiot laying on top of me," Sappnap grumbles, "You know how jealous this fucker gets?"

George doesn't dare look over, "That's ridiculous."

"Really?" Sappnap deadpans.

George sighs, traces a curve in the pillow of a cloud. "Are you sure you didn't just piss him off?"

"I'm sure I'm pissing him off right now."

"He's not allowed to be jealous," George mutters, "It's not like we're dating."

A careful beat of silence crawls through George's ears. "Didn't you guys go on a date?" It sinks into his own lips.

They'd asked for a table for two. They'd held hands, George carried butterflies. Dream tore his jacket off without another thought when the cold clipped George's skin.

"No," George answers sternly.

He smells mocha, some part of him wishing he could be there again. Sapnap's muted hum taunts him.

"This isn't going to become anything," George says sourly, more to himself than to Sapnap, "It's purely sexual attraction. We're just having fun."

"Ew, okay. Didn't need to know that."

George rolls his eyes.

He glances at the blonde, intending the look to be disguised by secrecy. But Dream's eyes reach him, too, only a second later. They're light, George is sure the venom was all in Sapnap's head, and they're as soft as the swaying trees. He smiles softly, too, and lifts the hand that lays empty to send George a small wave. George smiles quietly back.

"Did you kiss him?" Sapnap asks.

George frowns, wired eyes finding Sapnap again. "Did he tell you that?" Sapnap's own eyes widen.

"You did?"

George's lips part but the words puncture the sides of his throat. "Are we—talking about, like, today? Or the date."

"You kissed him *today*?" Sapnap hisses.

George studies his disapproving features and creased skin. "I didn't say that."

Sapnap's eyes narrow, "Way to play it safe, George."

"I don't see anything wrong with that," George defends.

Sapnap's gaze turns harsh though not a moment later, his eyes lift, leaving George. "Whatever," he murmurs, "I should probably tell you, the guys came to me saying something about a mark on your neck."

George's stomach coils. He resists the urge to lay the pads of his fingers against his pulse point. "Really?" he says on an exhale. Sapnap only nods. "Well, what'd they say, exactly?"

"I mean, they definitely think it's Dream if that's what you're wondering," Sapnap says, "Especially since you haven't been going out with us."

George inhales unsteadily. "What'd you say?"

"Just that you wouldn't do that with Dream again. That you're..."

George glares up at him, "That I'm smarter than that?"

Sapnap's eyes fall to his lap again, a light smile tugging at his lips. George feels amusement bubble in his chest, too, at his own stupidity.

"Alright," Sapnap says, a chuckle falling through his lips. He nudges George's shoulder, "You better get off of me before he comes over and removes you himself."

George rolls his eyes, landing on the grass with a scowl as he's pried forcibly from Sapnap's lap. "You're making that up."

"I'm really not," Sapnap declares through a grin, "Besides, we've had enough boy talk for today."

George glares, tearing himself away from the grass before his hair can collect the moisture.

And his eyes, of course, find the boy. The one who beams brilliantly at the pair he talks to, draws a slender cigarette away from his lungs as ash curls through his lips. It dances in the air before him and when he laughs, an innocent and fruitful laugh, more swells from his tongue.

And smoke sounds good right now, George thinks.

When his eyes catch Dream's gaze again, he beckons him over. And Dream throws the two a mere glance before he's rising from his spot.

As soon as Dream settles beside him, George plucks the cigarette from his fingers to fix it between his own teeth. He inhales, lets the candy rush to his head.

"Hey," Dream grumbles, "Are you just using me?"

George offers a vaguely wicked smile, pulling his knees up to his chest and letting soot spill from between his fingers. "Yeah, sorry."

Dream glares. His eyes drip to George's lips when he sticks the cigarette between them again. He looks away to dig something out of his pocket.

"So, this isn't too obvious for you?" he asks, thumb flicking the box open. A fresh roll is soon smothered by his lips as he reveals a thick silver lighter.

"What do you mean?" George murmurs.

He watches Dream's hand curve around the flame and the end of his cigarette ignite. When it's torn away from his lips, smoke creasing the air, his eyes find the three ahead of them. A quick flash of teeth and carved dimples catch George's blazing eye.

Dream turns to him again, motioning forward, "Them."

George follows the hand to where Quackity's eyes just fall away. He lets the next intake of tobacco and vanilla weigh on his eyelids. His teeth scrape his bottom lip. George shrugs.

He craves an arm around his waist and a shoulder to lay his heavy head on. He wraps his own arm around his stomach instead.

"They're bound to notice something is different," George reasons, "It's about time we started making up, anyway."

"Making up or making out?"

George glares at the empty air ahead of him, shakes his head in reprimand. "Hilarious."

Dream laughs softly. "So you think two years was enough of hating me?"

It ripples something in his otherwise steady heartbeat and George purses his lips. "Who said I don't hate you still?"

When Dream's eyes scratch George's skin again his lips are tilted upward, irises polished and glittering. George meets his gaze timidly, lungs weighted. "You kiss people you hate?" Dream teases. George glares. The embarrassment stings his fingertips.

"You kissed *me*," he mutters.

The grin widens, reveals teeth again. "You're such an asshole," Dream protests, "You lured me in."

George's lips pull into a guilty smile as he traces Dream's own, remembers the boy's lips tugging on his. Sunken eyes following George's calculated steps forward. He grazes Dream's elegantly sculpted bone structure before his eyes fall to his lap.

"Maybe," he mumbles.

"You don't hate me nearly as much as you wish you do," Dream declares.

George takes another drag of his cigarette bitterly, "I think I just hate you. Plain and simple."

Dream's smile quiets to something gentler as he rolls his eyes. "Okay, fine."

Fumes upset George's lungs again, his gaze branding Dream's skin as they do. Nowhere does Dream spell out hostility. His eyes are placid springs reflecting the rain-softened world surrounding them. His lips are an innocent pink and set in a blissful line, and his hair is tousled boyishly.

George leans into his side, head fitting against Dream's shoulder. He feels the breaths rocking Dream's frame hush for a moment, though they soon return. George chews at his lip, eyes blue where they stain the grass.

I have to hate you, his mind whispers.

Fingertips ghost over his waist before they fall away. George wants more than anything to lift the graceful hand and mold it around his side. If only it were that easy.

I should hate you.

If only it were that easy.

-

Wanna hang out?

George had ignored the message the first time he read it. When his phone flashed during class and the name that labeled the text sent his heart sinking. He'd wrenched his eyes away from the phone and pinned them to the board ahead of him instead. Hoped that would be enough. Dream's like a virus.

Now he stares at the letters again, head down while his feet pass over cement. He's not sure why the doubt trickled in, ready to still his marathon, and he's not sure if he'll follow it. He tosses the opportunity over and over again in his mind, only to find out he never really had an option.

Someone rises in his peripheral, matched with a velvet voice, "So he does have a phone."

Sparked eyes lift and scorch freckled skin. "Oh," George breathes, soles settling. He tucks the device into his pocket, "Hey."

The chunky sweater wrapping Dream's shoulders softens him, makes him look like so much less of a menace. Warm, inviting, deceiving.

A classy smile breaks Dream's lips, "Sorry, I didn't give you the chance to ignore me."

George sends him a glare, arching a brow. "I wasn't ignoring you, I was in a lecture," he half-lies.

Dream presses a palm to George's bicep, eyes light, "I'm kidding. You can say no, I'm just...I have nothing to do the rest of the day, so I thought if you're free..."

George sighs, shifts on his feet, and Dream is quick to take the books from his hands. George's eyes follow the gesture timidly. "I actually needed to head to the bookstore," he answers, "Need some novels for a few of my classes."

"I could be a helping hand," Dream hums.

"You want to come?"

He shrugs, smoked pupils dancing down the slope of George's nose to prick his lips. "Why not?" They reach his eyes again.

"I'm gonna be busy the whole time," George reminds, reprimands, "You won't have my attention."

Dream ticks his head to the side, a glint to his glare, "I think I'll manage."

George rolls his eyes as he turns away and begins scratching the pavement again. "Fine. But you don't get to distract me."

"Which means?" Dream's voice curls. The boy follows close by George's side.

"Keep your hands to yourself," he answers.

Dream laughs, velvet drawn from his lips. "I take that as a challenge."

"That's a demand," *a plea*.

He hums as though he's innocent, as though he couldn't pin George down and have him begging in seconds. "Whatever you say." Of course he knows it.

George grits his teeth, "You're an asshole."

They follow autumn leaves down the road, divine butterscotch patterns etching black pavement. The air is hollow, easy to take in and kind to George's lungs as he tries to avoid the side effects of Dream's fingers laced with his. They wind down the road, George following his drunk and sorry heart.

It's one of his favorite places to be, the quaint bookstore that carries empty windows on its back. It's subtle enough not to collect many guests, quiet enough to hear the flutter of pages and shuffle of soles scanning the aisles. There aren't many shelves in correspondence to the small space, but there are enough to carry what George searches for.

The windows let bashful light in, grace the cuts and curves of George's face with a pearl glow and subdued smile. He drifts toward the first row of books as he reaches into his bag.

A small white paper is plucked from the tote, one that he pushes into Dream's hands. "Hold this," he murmurs.

Dream takes the note, chasing the ink briefly. "This is like a scavenger hunt," he mumbles.

A peach smile scores George's lips. He spares Dream a glance, whose eyes set the smile aflame. "Read the first one out," George asks. When Dream does, he adds, "Genre?"

His feet start as his fingertip pursues the path of book spines. His eyes blaze up and down, blooming life to the letters in his mind. He stills before a particular column. The book is pried away from its spot and tucked within his palm. His eyes catch on the one above it and as he tears that one, too, away from the shelf, he murmurs, "Next one?"

George flips the book over, skims the backside as Dream reads out the second name. He merely nods in acknowledgment, still unmoving.

"That one's not on the list," Dream says. George reaches back to press a finger to Dream's lips, still vaguely examining the words printed out on the page.

"You wanted to come," he reminds. Then he faces the book forward again and places it atop the one cradled by his arm. "Don't get impatient already."

"I'm not getting impatient," Dream responds.

George says nothing, simply takes Dream's wrist in his grip and tugs him toward the next aisle.

"I made the list alphabetical order so I could just go aisle by aisle," George says, prideful and skimming the new line of books before him, "Since that's the way the store is set up."

"Well, aren't you brilliant," Dream hums.

George grins, "Genre?"

"Thriller."

They wander down the aisle, George scanning books while Dream scans him. George can *feel* his gaze, hooded eyes clinging to pink lips and the nerve-hindered blink of lashes. It burns as it heals, leaves unsure scars. When George comes to a stop Dream is right beside him, hand lifting and intention on his fingertips.

They draw a steady pattern on the inside of George's forearm until bare skin is goosebump-ridden. The touch lulls his breath deeper unwillingly. George fights the weight on his eyelids, tearing his arm away to reach up to the shelf.

"Stop that," he mutters. His eyes lower as he flicks through the pages, flips the story onto its backside to read the warnings, and keeps his lips flat. Dream only draws closer, the tip of his nose brushing George's temple before it slips down the side of his face. He draws a line of sizzling gasoline past cheekbones and down to George's jaw, breath spilling hot onto white skin.

George does his best to ignore him, does his best to keep his voice still. "Read the next one," he says lowly through the lump in his throat.

Dream's lips latch onto his pulse. When they separate from the spot, nevertheless leaving a lingering sting, George glances up at him. He sends a violet glare and adds the novel to the stack he holds as he reaches for Dream's hand.

His fingertips close around the folded corner. "Not gonna work this time," he mutters sharply.

Dream's lips spread into a hellish smile, irises heated until his pupils melt wider. George grits his teeth and bitterly turns away, boring his eyes into the page and ink.

Dream trails after him, a timber laugh cascading from his lips. George envies the ease of his stature. "George," he drawls.

"I'm only gonna go slower the longer you pester me," George warns. He plucks a book with an unfamiliar name from the shelf in emphasis.

"You're annoying," Dream mutters, reaching for the pile tucked within George's arm, "And gonna drop these."

George sighs, fits the book into the empty spot on the shelf as he grabs another. "Go get a basket. They're by the front."

Dream steps past him, murmuring low to George's ear, "Sure, princess."

George's lungs shudder though his face remains composed.

His eyes wander down the slopes of letters on his list as the new solitude drives composure into his skin. He inhales spruce and papyrus, roams the "E" section alone, and counts his steps. The low amber light helps, too.

When Dream returns, setting the basket down on the carpet floor, George is scrutinizing another volume. It's one that he tucks away, and they continue on. They fly through pages and slip past books in search of certain names. Of course, not without small spare touches from Dream. All in the name of unraveling George.

Sometimes, he'll leave a kiss on the top of George's head when it's craned down to study another cover. And when George ignores that, the tip of Dream's nose will trace over the top of his spine. Above where it descends into his shirt, beside where withered marks have signified Dream's previous success. Other times, he'll tear George's hand away from a page, lean his head against George's shoulder as he brushes over knuckles and draws along his palm. George will find it distracting but nevertheless, keeps his eyes on the page. And one time, Dream comes up behind him to read over the boy's shoulder, hand finding George's hip as he does so.

Fingers sneak under the hem of George's shirt. His jaw tightens.

"What's this one about?" Dream's hushed voice rumbles.

They dance cleverly up to the dip in George's waist down to his hipbone again and again, kindling a shiver on George's vertebrae.

"Do you actually want to know, or do you just want to hear my breath shake?" George answers flatly.

A low snicker falls behind him. Dream wraps his arms around George's waist, chin landing atop his shoulder. A kiss embraces the edge of his jaw.

"No, really. Tell me."

George exhales as pretty and prying lips find their way to his neck. "Um, it's about detectives," he murmurs as cleanly as he can manage, "Solving a murder." Two more kisses scorch the side of his neck. "Or something."

Dream can only hum, mouth preoccupied with digging into skin.

"You're a leech," George mutters. Fever races down his spine, weakens his bones. Ignites his veins. When Dream only hums again, George notes that he's just as dizzied.

Teeth sink into the arch of his neck and elicit a quiet gasp. One of George's hands reaches up, the pads of his fingers faintly brushing Dream's cheekbone. Through his haze, George still uses his fraying coherency to breathe, "Lower." Fangs scrape, and he adds, "The guys noticed last time."

That stops Dream's mouth. His teeth disconnect though his lips remain, parted and glossy and just ghosting up the side of George's neck. Though their presence is phantom, it rattles George all the same.

They stop when they land on the underside of his jaw, "They know, then?"

George swallows, stammers, "No."

"They know it was me," Dream persists, voice so rich and bruising it weighs heavy on George's chest.

"They don't know anything," he answers dully. He feels his skin pulled between teeth again and lets his eyes fall shut.

"Who else could bruise you this pretty," Dream purrs. The spot already feels sore.

"Dream," George attempts to scold, though it comes out breathy and feeble and he only sinks deeper into Dream's arms.

"You need to keep our secret better, George," Dream says, and George can read the faux disappointment. Somehow, he doubts Dream would feel bothered at all if their friends knew of the things he did.

Still, George whispers, "I know."

"And, please," Dream's lips drift even higher until they're grazing the shell of George's ear, "Don't let me affect you so easily."

George grits his teeth, "Fuck you."

Dream laughs darkly, the pads of his fingers pressing to George's hips again as he turns the boy slowly around. George's shoulder blades knock the bookcase, Dream's nose slotting with his, and he waits for the inevitable crash. For Dream's lips to defile his sense and saturate his greed, for his own to admit defeat.

But Dream's tar eyes only hold him down, and his lips only murmur, "You were so cautious before."

His fingertips ghost the heel of George's palm before dancing lower, George's fingers blooming open and his book falling to the floor. They lace with Dream's mindlessly.

George is an idiot. His mind screams virtue, begs the benign fragility to not wash over him, begs his joints not to give. His actions gasp vice.

George's vacant hand snakes through the air and fits around Dream's jaw, the pads of his fingers brushing loose hair. His eyes slip to Dream's mouth where it expels easy breaths. "Because we're in a bookstore, you fucking idiot," George hisses.

Dream beams. Brilliant dimples exposed and irises radiating sick satisfaction. "I know. How picturesque."

"A public space," George counters.

"I just can't help myself," Dream pouts, lips drifting toward the cut of bone beneath George's eye, "You're too pretty."

That weaves something unsteady through George's ribcage. His breaths stagger, the confession of something more than desire feeling all too heavy. Too dangerous. Too honest. Maybe it'd mean nothing if George couldn't already see this going further, see more doors opening that only lead to shadowed corridors.

So he says nothing, lets the compliment bleed. Dream, of course, notices.

"What," he whispers into a melted kiss on George's cheek. George inhales. His hand drifts higher, now grasping at the disarrayed strands.

"What?"

Dream leaves another kiss higher up, lips teeming with admiration. "You've gone quiet."

"No," George mutters.

Dream's voice devours his mildly stable state of mind. Low, boiling, black and sticky. "You never been called pretty before, George?" he asks. When it's aligned with Dream's eyes drilling into his once again, sweet and soft, George is left choking.

He breathes jaggedly, tongue grasping onto any words. "Not by you," he answers quietly.

Dream falters. His gaze travels the planes of George's face, eyes vaguely narrowed, and it doesn't seem as calculated as it does accidental when he admits, "Well, that's definitely not true." George finds that even more wildering, but Dream continues on before he has a chance to voice the fact. "Come on, you know you're pretty, George."

A fingertip sneaks under his shirt again, skips up to his waist before it drags back down. George says nothing. At the silence, it slips away to tuck a strand of hair behind George's ear. Dream hums discontentedly.

"You should know."

The proximity of his mouth is taxing on George's lungs, his patience waning.

George shakes his head in dismissal, "Just kiss me already."

A muted smile breaks Dream's disheartened expression, light shock dusting his irises. "Then we'd be even?"

He barely finishes his question before George's hand is tugging him forward, the boy mumbling,

"Something like that," into the crash of their lips.

And the fifth is just as intoxicating as the first.

Chapter End Notes

So sorry this chapter took so long (whoops) school & writing have been pretty difficult
BUT this chapter is a bit longer so hopefully that makes up for it.

Leave a comment or a kudos if you want, it is really appreciated, and follow me on
Twitter, @yungluvXD !!

xoxo :)

Carnival

Chapter Summary

Blurring lines, endless crimes.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

They lose count. After five kisses blends into endless sapphire nights and breathless violet moments, keeping track of each one escapes them. Especially with a steamed mind, especially when there are more important things, like Dream's palm scalding his skin or poisonous fangs puncturing his lips. And then his jaw, his neck. Collarbones. Dream never leaves his thighs blank.

It hadn't been long, but their intimacy developed quickly. After a time, it all began to feel.

Sort of.

Natural, Sapnap had proposed. And George had hated the word as soon as it was said. There's nothing natural about spending spare nights with a boy he's always found intolerable, believing it means nothing when small gestures say otherwise, and acting as though it never happened when around suspecting eyes. There *should* be nothing natural.

"I guess," George murmurs.

"Do you like him?"

That answer is always blurry.

With the way Dream treats him, admiring fingertips and consistent lips and the sweetest melody to charmed words, it should be an obvious yes.

George shakes his head, "I think it's just nice having somebody. Y'know?"

Admiring fingertips. Consistent lips. Sweet melody, charmed words.

"But I can never tell what he's thinking. Because...because when we hang out, usually it's just..."

"Sex."

George exhales a hollow laugh, chews on his lip. "But then he's so...nice. I think he cares a lot. I sort of feel guilty."

"Then talk to him, George."

"But we're good right now. Things are fine. I think it's fine, not knowing."

Maybe it's artificial. When he holds George's hand, litters kisses across his face. Meant to make George feel safer with Dream, comfortable.

"Do you think he likes me?" George asks, eyes lifting.

Sapnap's lips are tight, eyes vigilant. He falters.

"I don't know," he admits finally, "If you want to know, you'll have to talk to him."

George turns away, a frown embedded into his delicate features. "We're going out again tonight. See, that's what I don't get. He asks me to all these places like it's a—a date or something. Like we're dating. Maybe he just doesn't want me to think he's using me. Or something..."

"To where?"

George recalls the invite, when they'd been sat atop Dream's bed with the boy tracing his jaw so gently it nearly hurt.

"Gelato," George grumbles.

"Are you going to talk to him?"

"I don't think I want to."

"So you're just going to be weird all night?"

George exhales, eyes tilting toward the ceiling. "I usually forget about it once we're together. I forget about...lines, I guess, at all. That we don't really have a title. It just feels..."

"Natural."

He scowls, burns the plaster. "Tell me this is fucked."

Sapnap laughs lightly, "I think I already have."

Countless black nights where George had gotten home late, snuck back into Sapnap's disapproving glare.

"You think I'm an idiot?"

"A bit, but I think you like that."

George hesitates at that. "Why?"

"You're pretty clean-cut, George. And I think for once you'd like not to be."

George says nothing, silenced by the splashes of unlawful greed his mind reminds him of. Wicked touches. Near lips. Jade glass, black stoplights, the languid drop of lashes and daring flare of skin.

"What time's your date?"

He sighs and buries himself further beneath Sapnap's arm. "'S not a date."

"What time's your fucked-up get-together?" Sapnap bites back.

"You're really the worst."

"Get out of my bed, asshole, you've got places to be."

"Time is it?" George mumbles.

"Six twelve," Sapnap hums. He receives no answer, and adds, "Don't tell me you don't want to go

anymore."

George shakes his mind awake. "I do, I do. I'm just...confused. You've confused me."

"I didn't do anything."

Sapnap crawls off of the mattress, George left to slump against creased pillows and mushy blankets. He watches Sapnap drift toward the dresser tucked within the corner of their room and tug it open.

"You don't have to overthink it," he says, fingers scouring, "If you're having fun, that's all that matters." When his head lifts again, he tosses a slick jacket onto the bed, a poorly-suppressed smile pulling his lips inward.

George's eyes flick down to it; faded leather a few sizes too big. He sends Sapnap a sharp glare.

"Why do you still have that," Sapnap mumbles amusedly, returning to his digging, "You never wear it."

George scoffs. "Yeah, wear it and let the guys know I'm regularly hooking up with their best friend," he mutters. The shining collar and cuffs glare at him. He tears his eyes away. "How the fuck am I supposed to give it back?"

A pile of hazel fabric lands on top of the jacket. "Put it in his hand."

George scowls as denim is dropped in front of him.

Soon enough, he's ushered out of bed and basking in the harsh light of the bathroom, white tile to bore into him.

"Hi."

It comes out breathless, which George would be embarrassed by if he wasn't nearly dumbfounded.

The edges and angles fashioned so gorgeously from warm skin are only enunciated by tousled hair and golden highlights. Not to mention sparkling freckles. Or the thick denim jacket and thick black lashes.

Dream smiles, eyebrows lifting at the tone. "Hi." His voice breathes melody.

"Hi," someone calls from deep in the room.

Dream's eyes slip past George's shoulder and he laughs, announcing a firmer, "Hi Sapnap."

"Wanna come in for wine?" Sapnap offers.

Dream shakes his head, focus retraining on George. "I'm good." Darkened, lazy irises.

George would shove him into the hallway and pin him to the wallpaper right now. If he could just feel, even *fingertips*—

"You look cute," Dream murmurs, propping himself against the doorway. George blinks.

"Oh—" pupils scrape from his lips down to his thighs, "—thanks. I, um..."

"Spit it out," Sapnap hollers.

George clenches his jaw, fingers finding the cool metal of the doorknob. Marble irises glitter back at him. "We should go," he announces.

Dream tucks his lip between his teeth to disguise a proud smile as he nods. Though before they can dwindle from the room, Sapnap clears his throat, catching them at the doorway. George sends Dream an apologetic look before he's glancing over his shoulder.

He finds tilted brows and eyes flicking between him and the folded jacket at the foot of the bed. George glares, shakes his head. But Sapnap's gaze is steel and it bounds him to the leather without remorse.

George glances at Dream briefly once more and mumbles a small, "Um," before he's drifting away from the door. The glare he holds on Sapnap only hardens with each step until he's lifting the jacket and turning around again. When he stops before the blonde once more, he offers it forward without a word.

Dream's gaze catches on worn and dark fabric. Then it lifts to George, scatters to Sapnap, and settles on George once again. He breathes a small laugh.

"Wear it," he answers.

George's features twist into a frown, bleaching the jacket with it. "What?"

Dream pulls George's empty hand into his own, thumb beginning to follow his knuckles. "Yeah. It looks good on you."

"I was giving it back to you," George blurts.

Dream merely nods, "I'll take it back at the end of the night."

A beat of silence chafes George's lips. He knows grey eyes are wearing at his back, but nevertheless, George clears his throat and mumbles, "Okay." At that, Dream's irises caramelize, and he tugs George out into the hallway. Suede fingerprints reach for the doorknob and begin to shut the room behind them.

A soft voice muses, "Bye, Sapnap," leaving their final trace.

George sends the boy a troubled glare, "You're an asshole."

A grin slithers across Dream's lips, forked tongue peeking out between his teeth. He tears the jacket from George's grip. "You should've seen his face."

It's held up, Dream's fingers pinching the collar, and so George slips his arms through. Palms smooth the fabric over his shoulders. "I don't think you're helping this situation at all," he mutters.

Dream hums as George faces him again, baneful eyes tipped up at dancing freckles. The seam of Dream's lips parts, pupils shadowed. "I'm sorry," his timber voice sings.

George swallows, dewy-skinned and softened. His lungs buried. Dream's eyes drop to fabric that tumbles far past where it should as time drags slowly by. George finally turns away.

"I'm sure you are," he mutters, "Where are we going?"

Downtown is their prime victim for nights like these, where they dawdle past curved and looming buildings and doodle their footsteps in slick pavement. Autumn is split at its seams, fully burst now. It paints their whirling world in butterscotch and jet black, shades of grey so wicked they strike comfort rather than fear.

The palm tucked into a leather pocket grows crescents from the dig of fingernails. His other one lays stolen, and the glove encompassing it may as well be wringing his heart. The gesture, as simple as it is and consistent as it's been, never fails to spoil his cheeks with sticky crimson dust. Especially when Dream holds on just tight enough. Like it's really his possession.

They end up stowed in the warm corner of a gelato shop, a scoop in each of their hands. George peeks over the rim of Dream's cup, steals a bite as Dream watches with a flaring gaze, honey smile barely brushing his lips. And he kisses George, murmurs something about how he tastes like vanilla, and then wraps an arm around his waist and tugs him toward the exit. And George feels like he's floating.

They wander, drip down the road once more, steps hindered by the way they're wrapped around each other. Sugar scratches George's veins and his skull brims with buttercream, every worry melted away. It becomes easy. The soft hum of Dream's ivory words, the steady drum of George's heart. A hidden sun sinking into the horizon. Countless steps, vital touches. Unkempt affection. Young greed. Sick surrender.

Sweet passes within a beaming city fade into low-light scrambles for skin. Turns into George clutching Dream's jaw while Dream grasps his hips. From the door to the lone bed of Dream's near-empty room, they fawn over romantic collarbones and pretty blemishes. It's the pattern they've followed a hundred times before. Breath is sucked from their lungs, purple windpipes to match the bruises on their throats.

And the grandeur and glory of wanderlust lips whisper goodnight.

-

George wakes up alone, pushed to the side of a twin bed that isn't his and wrapped up in off-white sheets. His view of the room is obscured by still covered windows, though scattered light faintly peeks through the curtains. The spot beside him only holds a dent in the mattress.

The night comes back in fragments. George recalls that he'd never gone home, nor had he voiced this plan to Sapnap.

George pulls himself from the pillow, sits upright. The sheets shift, fall away as they pool around his waist. George spares his bare torso a guilty glance before his eyes are drawn to the amber that slips from an open door. Running water sings its haunting chorus.

As George's feet land on the floor and carry him toward the sound, he scans the area. The foot of the bed, the carpet floor, the bedside table. None hold what he searches for, though, and George stills in the doorway disappointed.

He rubs his eyes at the fresh light. The water is shut off as Dream faces him, sleep having turned his eyes puffy and his hair rumpled. The opalescent bathroom light lets his skin glow, enunciates the sharp lines between bronze and mulberry.

"Hey," he greets gently, "Sorry, did I wake you?"

George shakes his head, answers, "No, you're fine." Velvet eyes pass over him with a kind glaze and George feels his own bruises begin to breathe ashes. "Have you seen my phone? I forgot to text Sapnap," he murmurs.

"I haven't, but I'm sure it's around here somewhere."

George's hand falls away from the doorframe as a frown is cast upon his features. "What time is it?"

Dream's quiet, habitual smile fades into thought. He glances past George into the dim room. "Um, seven, I think."

George exhales, steps forward into the bathroom. "Shit," he mumbles.

"Sorry," Dream says lowly, a shy smile touching his features.

George steps in front of him to run the water again, eyes finding the mirror as he does.

"We probably shouldn't do this when we have class in the morning," he muses.

Dream watches his reflection. Fluffed hair and dark irises, the splashes of wine crawling down his neck, his chest, his ribs, disappearing under his waistband. The pink etched into the apples of his cheeks. Dream's gaze bounds him to flashing memories.

It lightens when he leans down to wrap his arms around George's waist. "You can borrow something if you want," he murmurs, pressing a kiss to George's cheekbone. George sinks, holds his breath as Dream pulls away, featherlight fingertips lingering on his hipbone. And he's about to slip away, leave George alone in the bathroom. Which George finds unfair.

He turns away from the sink and catches Dream's wrist before he can think it over, pulling him back. His hand captures Dream's jaw while his own inclines, the way Dream's gaze instantly turns lidded clouding his head with steam. A hand finds his waist as pretty lips crash down on his.

George feels the yearning, the rich yet soft slide of lips and the sad wilting of eyelids. His chest aches with uncertain guilt but still, he pulls Dream closer, breathes less, heartrate soaring higher. Mind weightless, he steals kiss after kiss, sucks Dream's lips swollen.

When palms fall lower and fingers dig into his thighs, George exhales softly against his mouth. He's lifted onto the counter, the cold bite of marble to accompany Dream's grip. Fabric bunches at the top of his thighs and exposes bold pinches of scarlet. As his lips slow, Dream traces the marks with a lone fingertip, his other hand spread over the top of George's thigh.

He spares the milk skin a tipsy glance before his eyes find George again. He leaves another sweet kiss on George's awaiting mouth, murmurs low under his breath, "Pretty."

Heat scrapes George's empty lungs. He presses the tip of his nose to Dream's pulse point, hides sunken and ebony eyes, tugs the skin of Dream's neck between his teeth briefly.

"Dream," he breathes, voice gasoline. Dream's is liquor.

"Hm, princess?"

George's face heats and he squeezes his eyes shut. Desperation touching his tongue, he says

nothing, instead kisses down the line of Dream's neck.

Dream's thumb applies more pressure to each healing spot on the inside of George's thigh as his hand scrapes upward. His lips linger beside George's ear, "You want me to bruise you again?"

George buries a soft moan in the arch of his neck. When he sinks his teeth into Dream's skin again, fingers thread through his hair, nearly scolding.

"George, you'd be covered."

George hums, clutching tighter at Dream's neck. Though he's soon tugged away from the spot and forced to meet Dream's careful gaze.

Frustrated, George presses their foreheads together, pulls Dream closer. "Bruise me," he asks, coats his irises with faux innocence when he adds, "Your lips feel so good."

Dream's eyes darken impossibly further, a weighted breath escaping his lips. Swollen pupils cast tar upon white skin.

And George is late to class.

-

Sapnap's irritation with them only climbs from there. From stealing his dorm at odd hours and sneaking back home with criminal prints of teeth and insisting he say nothing about it all, Sapnap's scowl soon turns permanent. And George would feel guilty. If he wasn't so tired of beating himself up already. He's gone over it enough, justified every illicit sapphire night and then stacked them away on a shelf that he knows he'll look at again. And now he's tired.

So they always see each other again, no matter how acute Sapnap's glare is. They spend a lot of days at George's, most nights at Dream's. And sometimes, it's not just lust that steals their time together, stains their eyes black. Though often it turns into that.

Where George sits atop fluffed bedsheets and bathed in dull light, he's meant to be catching up on some reading for a daunting class. And he's been doing good thus far, eyes and mind trained on rows and rows of inked words, devouring them all. Where he finds his demise is in the boy before him.

George had warned him, too. Insisted that Dream would only get bored because it's happened many times before. But Dream insisted that he'd be just fine.

Dream lays on his stomach, feet swaying in the air. He seems nothing like a menace, with candied eyes and golden hair that paint him innocent. And he'd been rather patient, for a while. Though left unentertained for too long, now he wraps kind fingers around George's thigh and pries it away from the other.

George spares him a curious glance but Dream simply carries on without faltering. He places a small kiss just above George's knee, his cherry lips gentle. The second one is higher up, toward his inner thigh, and just as sweet. The third one is accompanied by the scrape of teeth.

George's eyelashes flutter as lips and ivory suck on the spot, delicate skin met with brutal

admiration. His breath hitches in his chest and he tries to just go back to reading, to ignore the leech of a boy, but none of the words will stick anymore.

George's eyes scour the page as another kiss bites higher. It's clement lips and unforgiving teeth and it leaves his thoughts in a puddle. The sting left behind each time they latch onto a different spot weighs on his lungs. George can picture it now, milk-white skin tainted by patches of scarlet.

Dream's thumb hooks underneath his knee to lift it from the mattress. George's eyes wander toward him again only to find that it was so he could bruise the underside of George's thigh, too. Dream's eyes are lidded and lazy as he paints, never caring to reach George's. Fangs puncture even softer skin.

"Dream," George says in an attempt at scolding. It leaves his tongue rather gentle, though.

Dream's nose and glossy lips drag down the expanse of George's thigh. It sends a shiver down George's spine. "You should wear skirts more often," Dream mumbles into the skin, voice crushed and dizzied velvet.

George watches numbly as Dream lets a merciful kiss melt into the skin of his inner thigh. His palm slides brazenly toward George's hips, nearly slipping under the pleats of his skirt.

"It's—" he cuts off as teeth sink into skin again, inhaling sharply and chewing at his bottom lip to keep a sigh at bay, "It's autumn. Too cold."

"I'll keep you warm," Dream hums. His lips and his hand leave as he shuffles into the spot between George's legs, feet tucked under him. His gaze is drunken, George would nearly say lovesick, though it's probably closer to lust. He takes the book from George's hands gently and flips it closed, discarding it somewhere toward the left.

"I was reading that," George complains, albeit feebly.

Dream presses their foreheads together, hands find George's thighs again and his fingers digging into their undersides. "You read too much."

His teeth close around George's bottom lip and George gives in completely, chasing after Dream's mouth. He fits their lips together, eyes falling shut.

Dream's lips are gorgeous, George doesn't know if he could ever get tired of them and even the thought is embarrassing. They radiate fever, taste like brown sugar. They're purposeful in never giving too much, in always having George pursuing more. It's as infuriating as it is invigorating.

Greedy hands tug on his thighs and have him climbing onto Dream's lap. His fingers thread through Dream's hair hoping that this much control will give him what he wants, more of Dream's lips. He presses harder but Dream's lips remain syrupy and slow, torturous. Dark eyes obviously seem not to care for George's retaliation.

Dream tugs George's legs wider apart, has him slumping closer. George grinds shallowly forward without thought, groaning low into Dream's mouth. And, seemingly triumphant, Dream's lips slow as they break into a malevolent grin. His smoked gaze slips tantalizingly slow over George's features.

"God, you're gorgeous," he murmurs, his voice a saturated rumble. It makes George's head spin.

He says nothing, only pries Dream's lips open and slips his tongue between the boy's teeth. It gives him exactly what he wants, the lush drag of lips in a meaningful capacity.

Dream's palm dares to dance higher, crawl up George's skin until his fingertips just barely sneak beneath the hem that sits high on his thighs. His hand spreads across the expanse of George's upper thigh and grips ivory skin sharply.

At the touch, biting knuckles and the cut of slender rings, George exhales against the side of Dream's face, eyes fluttering shut. Dream's lips merely reattach to the side of George's neck and prod the skin there.

George's own fingertips wander toward Dream's collar mindlessly. He plucks the first button open, feathery white fabric falling open to reveal sweet collarbones. They follow the column, slowly reveal tanned and toned skin piece by piece. His fingerprints drip between Dream's ribs and the carvings in his stomach before his palm flattens against them, and he pushes Dream backward.

The boy lands breathless against the mattress, leaving his silhouette in the covers. When his hands try to slip even higher, just below the hips pinning him to the bed, George catches his wrists. And those are soon pinned to the bed, too.

With his arms stretched over his head, Dream's muscles are even more defined, bronze skin shimmering through the sheer fabric. The same fabric falls open around his torso and lands in the cloud of blankets as it frames another stretch of muscles. He looks elusive, a pure *dream* because how could this boy be real and not a Greek myth?

As soon as George cuffs his wrists, bounds them to the mattress, leans over the boy he's straddling, Dream's eyes soften. They tilt upward, watch George with something sticky and sweet. A halo of hair splayed across the foot of the bed softens his appearance even further.

"George," he breathes weakly, lashes jet black.

George revels in it. Inhales Dream's state, memorizes it with every scrape of his pupils.

He leans down, sinks into Dream's lips briefly before he's abandoning them. His teeth close around the edge of his jaw instead, a sharp intake of breath going straight to his foggy mind. Then he finds thinner skin below the hinge of his jaw and wounds that spot, too.

He watches it turn scarlet from the impact of his teeth. The sight weighs thickly on his lungs and he spares Dream a quick, shadowed glance before he's dipping down again, piercing the side of his neck this time. And then the arch, the front of his throat, the fierce angle of his collarbone.

George leans back to marvel at the realm of skin he'd covered. Pretty champagne canvas darkened, bruised.

When George's fingers uncurl from around Dream's wrist and waltz downward, Dream's arm doesn't stray from its place on the mattress. George follows lilac veins through the veil of fabric where they wilt down the inside of his arm, seam his glowing skin. Then he traces his bicep, the blunt curves and cuts of muscle. His eyes follow his finger with clemency.

"You can take my shirt off," Dream voices abruptly. George finds his gaze prideful, "I mean, if you're just gonna ogle at me."

George's eyes narrow and he closes the distance between them again, interlocks his fingers with Dream's. "I'm not ogling," he mumbles against the boy's lips, sending him a pointed look.

Dream cracks a quiet smile. "That's adorable."

"I wasn't ogling," George insists. His eyes fall closed as he melts a kiss onto Dream's mouth.

Dream barely hums before he's surrendering to the messy fold of lips, clutching George's hand tighter.

Their fragrant solitude and numbed limbs are broken by a rap at the door, one that's only seconds later followed by an inconvenienced, "Can I come in?"

George tears his lips from Dream's abruptly, eyes lifting to the door as the spike in his heart settles. "No," he calls back.

"Please?"

"Go away, Sapnap."

He hears a muffled groan. "This is my dorm too, you know."

"Go to Karl and Q's or something," George dismisses absently, deciding that's the last of it as he leans down again, bites into Dream's lips.

"I was just there," Sapnap retorts.

He receives no answer, George's mouth too preoccupied and his mind stolen once again.

"I'm coming in," Sapnap announces.

"No, *Sapnap*—"

The door is flung open, George holding a firm glare on it and the boy who strides in. As soon as Sapnap's eyes land on the two, they're flicking away.

"Jesus Christ," he mutters.

Dream clears his throat. "Hi, Sapnap."

Sapnap's jacket lands on the foot of his bed, a sure sign that he's not leaving. "Hi, Dream."

"Get out," George demands.

"No."

Irises pinched and dull, he huffs, "*Sap*—"

"You know what, George, I'm taking a stand," Sapnap interrupts, "I want my dorm back."

George presses his forehead to Dream's chest, releases a bitter groan onto the bare skin. "You will, fuckhead, just give me a minute."

The sound of a dipping mattress mocks his shallow attempt. "I've heard that one before," Sapnap mumbles.

A low snicker lands atop George's head. He sits up again, sends a dim glare toward the boy laid out beneath him. Dream tucks a vague smile between his teeth.

His arms tear away from George's feeble grip as he pulls himself off the mattress, hands landing on the boy's waist. A kiss bleeds into George's cheekbone.

"You have work to do, anyway," Dream murmurs warmly. It only serves to deepen George's glare.

He leaves Dream's lap, presses his back to the wall instead and folds his arms across his chest. He watches with greyed eyes as Dream does up his buttons, hides gorgeous satin skin again. When he completes the row, he finds George with glittering eyes and crashes into the pillows again, a lopsided smile dashed across his lips.

George finds the spot beside him reluctantly, Dream's arm curling around his waist almost as an instinct. The ivory cover of a forgotten book is placed in his hands.

So they sink into the simplicity of light sheets and tangled limbs again, fall victim to the autumn hues spilling in from the window. While one of Dream's hands remains splayed across George's side, the other follows the path made by magenta flecks along George's thigh. And while George's mind overflows with words from each page, Dream's lips etch pixie dust into the edge of his jaw. They merely *drag* across the line of bone, faintly trace the shape, and never give enough. But what *really* drives George crazy is the way that occasionally, Dream will hum their song.

The familiar tune drawn from Dream's own throat, thundering through George's skull, is enough to stump his heart.

For one, Dream's voice is his favorite. The velvet baritone could either empty his mind, swell his heartbeat, or sink his lungs. And hearing *that* chorus, the one that'd stapled George to both sanity and mania and stunned him to silence countless times, *that* chorus strung by Dream's own vocal cords drains him of lucidity at all. Only his troubled heart and wasted lungs sing along with the melody.

Though at the same time, the soft notes beg his least favorite question. Because with something like this, something so sweet titled "theirs," could having each other in the way that they do really be meaningless? Does Dream label it "theirs" in his own mind, too? Or is George spinning this path all by himself?

Is it really just a song, and is it really just fun?

How *sad* is their unspoken game.

And will George ever find an end.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you for reading! This fic has been really fun so far and I'm so excited for these upcoming chapters ;)

Kudos & comments are appreciated, follow me on Twitter because I post snippets and ask questions sometimes <3 @yunglurvXD

Redamancy

Chapter Summary

Dream has his entire mind. George is maddened by this notion.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

When the approaching winter only hugs them closer, George falls into the habit of feeling. The kind that has him daring to imagine a place where Dream feels, too. The kind that's taught him the true splendor of every inch of Dream's skin. The kind that's easy to ignore at first, mainly for fear of the evil that comes with anything more. Losing words, losing sleep, losing *him*.

It's quiet enough for George to pretend that he doesn't feel it, and so he acts as he normally does. Though sometimes it's hard not to notice the way he clings to Dream's company more now, and the way that Dream's words and Dream's touch seem to come with a wildly uneven melody in his heart.

But it's simply nerves, it has to be.

He's still adjusting to having someone around all the time.

Someone like *Dream* for someone like *him*.

Because while Dream is a fairytale, lush lips and wild whims and gushing *gold* with every breath, George is George.

George isn't his.

And so he'll have to think of feeling another time. Preferably when Dream does, too.

-

The row of hearts and spades that George clutches to himself may as well have a speech prepared. *Mocking* him. Something like, "bury your heart," George hears. He merely scowls and discards an eight in penalty.

It's quickly covered by another card as his mind is sidetracked by a sorrowful, "I feel like we never see you anymore, George."

His eyes lift, swollen with defense. Danger, confrontation, a threat to his fun.

"That's not true."

"I think so too," Sapnap murmurs. When his gaze finds George over the edge of his own hand, it's blue. The hint of a reprimand slices his pupils.

Karl shrugs as he leans over to drop a card, too. "You just feel a bit distant," he comments, "I can't remember the last time we all hung out together."

George feels papercuts begin to sting his palms as guilt tears through him. "I've been busy," he answers curtly.

Sapnap's scoff earns a lethal silver glare.

"It's almost the end of term," George reiterates, "I've been catching up on work, doing my paper and stuff."

The stare that Sapnap holds on him saddens, though it's still firm. His fragmented and greyed irises tug on George's veins.

The conversation breaks away when the room is torn open, pieces of resentment leaving their throats and the shards stuck into their flesh instead. George finds himself far too eager to lay his eyes on pretty features, no matter how bad it stings.

Maybe he had been more distant lately in favor of wasting his days away with Dream, George is too blinded to notice. Or maybe he simply doesn't care. Can't care. This sin could take him far enough from his virtues.

Just for the headrush that Dream gives him. He'd chase the feeling till it ruined him.

-

Alone, George sinks beneath the comfort of heavy covers, the window to wash simple light in. Fond notes creep up from the device that bends the mattress beside him. He scores a fluttering page and lets supple ink cast his ideas away. The walls breathe quietly but the ceiling dips into George's sapphire puddle of thoughts sharply.

When he looks up from his lap for the first time since he fell into his focus-induced coma, he finds the sky outside the window painted differently. White tufts of their bleeding winter scrape the pale blue background and descend softly. George sits up straighter to peek over the windowsill and see the snow-kissed grass below.

When the image he'd hoped to find rings true, it sends a winded, happy pattern to his heart.

Socks hit the carpet not a second later and fly toward the dusty scene. Palms curl around the edge of the window as he presses his nose to the glass. The outside world reads like a slumber party from the sky; pillows broke open and feathers spilling out, their roads and buildings to catch them.

And then he's flying toward his bed again, phone tucked within his hand before he knows what he's doing and soon enough pressed to his ear.

The flat drone of the dial tone falls between his heartbeats. George wraps an arm around his stomach, glances toward the window again.

Pick up.

The nerves fill his ribcage, thick and cold.

Why do I need you to pick up.

"Hello?"

Dream's voice is landline-warped and curious. It rips through George's skull.

Fragmented wings build and bruise his stomach and he holds his breath.

"George?"

Gorgeous, even with the gap between them, crystallized fire splitting him open. George's lips part but his throat feels entirely hollow.

"Hi," he manages.

Dream laughs lowly, softly. George squeezes his stomach to will the sick feeling away. "Hi," he echoes in the way that he does, in the way that urges George to continue yet still smiles with patience, "What's up?"

George frowns, lifts his gaze from the floor to his frosted window. *Why did he call.*

"It's snowing," he says bluntly.

Milk petals weakening the sky, confessing switching seasons to the city. *Why did he call.*

"What?" Dream asks.

George inhales, squeezes his eyes shut as his fingertips dent his lips. His hand falls away when he exhales. The breath scarcely catches his secret-laced fingerprints. "It's snowing," he repeats.

They falter for a moment, quiet as they carry George's empty observation. He hears a muted shuffle before Dream answers, "It is."

George says nothing. Unstable anticipation courses through his veins, embarrassment rippling his skin. The silence is heavy.

"Can I come over?" Dream finally adds.

George blinks, glances at his door briefly.

"Sure."

A faint laugh slips past Dream's lips and it reaches George's lungs. "I'll be right there," he murmurs.

The cruel sound of the call ending follows before George's room is turned quiet again. He waits in it; beige and boiling silence.

When Dream appears at his door, his knock answered by George, the boy is lavishly decorated by winter. Vibrant crimson lips and cheeks from the touch of cold, happy puffs of snow nestled in his hair. Wrapped in a coat, irises glistening. Dream coos an adoring hello and George stares.

Stares, because where have his words gone. A beat later he finds the strength to turn away from the door with a half-minded "hello" in response.

The door shuts under Dream's hand, brilliant laugh pouring from his tongue. His arms capture George's waist before the boy can get very far.

"What's wrong?" he murmurs, rose lips crushing down on George's cheekbone, "You're being weird."

George sinks into his touch, palms slipping over Dream's forearms. His heart is warm. His cheeks are warm.

"I'm not," he protests feebly.

"Mhm," Dream hums into his shoulder, "You're being short. And slow to talk."

Dream's gentle arms fall away. George frowns to himself, though he doesn't say anything, only turns to face Dream. His eyes catch on the white clinging to the boy's hair. A hand lifts and tingling fingertips comb through the strands mindlessly.

"You have snow in your hair," he states.

"That's what happens when you walk through the snow," Dream answers with a nearly tucked away smile.

George sends him a vague glare and lands on the edge of the bed behind himself, "You're going to get it on my floor."

Dream says nothing, instead leans down and plants one hand on the mattress, the other on George's waist. Sharp cold seeps through the thin fabric of George's t-shirt but he makes no attempt to tear it away. And when Dream aligns their lips, the wings return, this time to scar.

He takes George's lip gently between his, George quick to chase the feeling, weak as he places a hand on Dream's jaw to ask him closer. With silk lips George kisses him again, eyes shut. Brown sugar bleeds into his brain, his mind a cozy place now too.

Dream inhales dizzily, his lax jaw so generous to George's melting mouth. But he leaves, replaces his lips on the sharp cut of bone by George's chin. That kindles a gnawing flame.

"Get your coat," Dream says into the skin. George frowns, blinks through his pleasant daze.

"Why?"

Lips continue to braid impatience within his skin, his own eager. "It's snowing," Dream answers, rumbling voice hushed. He leaves an especially lingering kiss on the satin skin behind George's ear, his touch floral.

"Oh," George breathes, too lightheaded to offer anything else.

Dream laughs sweetly against the side of his face and George takes the opportunity to catch his lifted lips again.

Their motions are languid, diligently stitching thorns into rich velvet lips. Dream's hand hugs George's shape tighter, drips down to his hip, and George greedily tugs his hand lower. Dream merely breathes a wicked laugh against his mouth as he pushes George backward into the mattress and stands from the bed.

"Get your coat," he repeats through a proud, subdued smile, eyes glowing. George glares.

"What are we even doing," he mumbles.

Dream shrugs cutely, "You're the one who called me." He turns away, steps toward the dresser on the right wall.

Soon a sweater is thrown at George and a thicker coat melded around his shoulders. Dream urges him out the door, all the while beaming and especially gentle with each fleeting touch. He cradles, murmurs, leaves polka dot kisses, holds George's hand. And as they reach the world beyond the window, he doesn't let go.

The snow's even prettier up close. It's fragile to touch unless it touches first, settles on the sharply cut pavement or a pair of welcoming mittens. Faultless snowflakes and shrapnels of winter slip down the road in a flurry. They descend quietly to the ground, some getting caught in the manes of trees and hoods of stoic cars. Ivory becomes of their city; buildings and sidewalks and benches and bushes all decked in frost. George inhales their wonderland and exhales delight.

He lowers himself briefly to the ground to collect a bit of the thin snow in his palm. He then packs it tight and earns a wintry gumball.

"Snowball," he announces as he turns to face Dream, the creation pinched between his fingers.

Dream's eyes slide from George's vanilla features to the feeble thing, and he laughs harmoniously, "That is not a snowball."

George scowls, "Yes it is."

"That's a shit snowball."

"It's a ball of snow," George defies with a shrug, "Snowball." He lifts it higher and lets it crash and burst upon Dream's head. "See?"

Dream tenses, vaguely withdraws. Narrowed eyes land on George.

The look is a threat; razorblade pupils and a firm jaw, though it's heavily combated by his rosy cheeks and the glint of his irises. George feels it warmly, any harm absent. But nonetheless he smiles coyly and takes a small step backward, Dream pursing his lips in quiet consideration.

"Just proving my point," George defends with another step backward.

Dream nods but it feels anything but reassuring. Slowly, he begins to crouch down, never tearing his gaze from George and in an instant, the boy begins sprinting down the sidewalk.

His footsteps drill heavily into the pavement as he rushes away from Dream's uncivil hand. The cold bites his cheeks and nose scarlet, flushes his throat raw, but he never slows. Pushing against silver air and a shell of snow, the world quickly blurs around him.

When he glances over his shoulder, Dream is hurtling down the sidewalk, too.

Childlike thrill and panic split his face with a boundless smile.

"Stop!" he calls in a breathless rush. More winter air scrapes down his throat.

"You scared?" Dream taunts in return.

"No," George answers unsteadily. The snowball stowed away in Dream's hand isn't even what frightens him; it's the prospect of being chased.

With a few yards of distance to spare, George slows. As quick as he can manage he leans down and scoops a scarce portion of snow from the ground.

As soon as he stands he's met by a grinning face and a raised arm ready to fall. With a jump in his heart, he catches Dream's wrist and raises his own snowball. They're left at a standstill.

"Don't do it, George," Dream warns. The smile spread across his face leaves George breathless. Dimples, swollen cheeks, swollen pupils, irises *glowing* with it.

He looks enchanted. Naïve to any and every flaw in this exact moment and stolen by the snowstorm. By George, maybe. Maybe, with the way he looks at him. Maybe his lungs mirror a wasteland, too. Maybe his heart nearly fails, too. Maybe in a world of white, he sees George in color. What George would do to have that.

His chest feels loud. A melodramatic plague of *feeling*, sick and divine and romantically brutal. Internal torture, a devastating need for hope. His stomach sinks, his mind quiets, and his chest feels loud.

Something cold spills over his head and knocks him awake. George's arm drops from its threatening position to land limp by his side. Dream smiles at him.

"You hesitated."

The snowball slips from George's grasp and flattens on the pavement. "We're tied, then."

Dream hums, hands finding their spot on George's waist as he leaves a kiss on the top of George's head. "Even," he corrects.

"For now," George argues.

Dream laughs faintly as he presses their foreheads together, nose prodding George's. "Sure, you couldn't even handle running a few feet."

"I..." George's gaze slips to Dream's merry and red lips, "...could." His chest rocks with thinning breaths.

Suffocated by all that he wants. To be kissed, loved, held by him. How often George would trace Dream's jaw, scald hearts in his palm, if they weren't so clueless about what they mean to each other.

He watches Dream, the boy glazed by opalescence and adolescence and illicitly *radiant* so George mumbles, "You're beautiful," as soon as the thought surfaces. His skin instantly heats, daring against the bitter cold.

Dream's face softens. His smile falls away, eyes melting into clement curiosity as George's stick terrifyingly to devotion. Painted bold across his face, even sticking to the languid blink of his eyelashes. He bites his bottom lip where the words slipped and hides his eyes, pressing his forehead into Dream's chest. Fear scorches his stomach.

After a paralyzed moment, Dream slowly wraps his arms around George's shoulders and holds him.

I don't know, George's mind whirrs. Cold desolation and unfamiliar inhabitants seep into his skull. He squeezes his eyes shut while humiliation curls his fingers.

I don't know what I'll do if you don't need me. If you don't need me the same way I need you.

He'd whisper it against Dream's chest if he knew only his heart would hear.

Need me.

Need me to need you.

-

When George stumbles back into his dorm, it's no longer empty. And the calm air, he notices, has been spoiled. Sapnap's face is embedded with wrinkles and sad tones. An array of pens and pages dents the blankets where he sits, and bleeding ink rests beneath his fingertips where they once chased the lines.

"Where were you?" he asks gently, following where George lays his thick coat and mittens over the foot of his bed.

"Um," the look on Sapnap's face warns him of something delicate and dangerous, "Out."

"Out?"

George settles on the edge of his mattress, face to face with Sapnap's deepened frown. "Yeah."

The room, steeped in blue, bites at him critically. Sapphire crescents are left in his skin. And the ceiling slowly begins to slip from its perch, ready to collapse.

"Tell me where you were," Sapnap asks.

"Why do you care so much," George mutters. As he tugs his shoes from his heels, worry viciously begins to tar his bloodstream, nerves pricking his throat.

"Because you were supposed to meet me—" a quick glance to the clock, "—an *hour* ago to help me study."

George's head lifts as the promise finally resurfaces in his memory. Guilt flattens his lips.

"Like you said you would."

"Shit, I'm so sorry," George rushes, "I totally forgot. I can help you now, though, we can do it right now—"

Sapnap's expression doesn't ease. He glances at the snow-kissed leather of George's shoes, voice naive, "What were you doing?"

George hesitates, dizzy on a platform of uncertainty. Carefully, he answers, "Just out with Dream."

The fragility saddening Sapnap's exterior washes away, leaving a firm but blank canvas. After a moment his eyes fall to the notebooks sprawled out before him, and he says nothing.

George exhales, "Sapnap."

"It's fine, I don't need your help anymore."

He pauses as Sapnap flips a page. "Don't be angry with me," he pleads lowly.

Sapnap is silent for a moment and George expects that to be the last of it; silence. Sapnap traces the words on his page, George's heartbeat swelling quicker before his terse statement.

"It's not gonna work, George," he mutters.

Bitter, shallow, George struggles to fit it into place.

"What?"

"You and Dream."

He falters, stumbles over the aimed jab, Sapnap's eyes and words serrated. "That's not what we're talking about," he answers sourly.

"Do you like him?" Sapnap pushes. Grey, callous.

"We're not talking about this," George repeats, jaw tightening.

"Why not? It's clearly more important than whatever I feel," acid pools in George's insides as Sapnap daggers him, "Talk about it."

He searches desperately for his friend in the cold face of this stranger.

"*Sapnap*—"

"You don't even know what you're *doing*," he tears, "You can't even *admit* that you like him, and you're too scared for it to ever go anywhere. It's a fucking mess, George."

"You said as long as I'm happy," George argues, brows tense.

"Yeah, that was before he started taking priority," Sapnap thunders, "And I started getting pushed to the side."

"You're *not*—"

"You're too blind to notice because you've always got a tongue down your throat."

George stares, wide-eyed and jaw clenched as their severing wire sparks and frays. The pressure of the room builds on his skull.

"It's not working anymore. It's not working for me, Karl and Q don't even *know* you anymore. You're always gone. You don't even give them an explanation, George. Sure, they act like it doesn't matter, but it doesn't even feel like you want us. Because you only see Dream, you only want Dream, never mind the fact that he was a *dick* to you, for *years*—"

The room floods. George is weighted, lungs already full of chlorine.

"You're isolating yourself. All for some fling that won't mean anything in a month."

George shakes his head, narrowed gaze icy, "You just can't handle the thought of me caring about anyone else. Anyone above you."

Sapnap's glare punctures, his lips parting to say something in defense. George makes a point to silence him, tired of hearing the truth and tired of basking in it. Tired of feeling guilty for every choice he's made.

"If you're gonna be this selfish then I don't know why we're friends anyway. You can just leave me alone."

They fall quiet. Triumphantly, tragically, they fall quiet. Weighted air leans on their shoulders, bleak with ruptured promises. In compliance with George's request, Sapnap murmurs something about Karl's and begins packing his things, hands quick and steady.

George watches him go.

-

It doesn't snow again the day that follows. George stumbles past the melting storm on his way to class, somberly scrapes its dwindling trace. By night, it's gone.

And now again he frowns at the blank, damp grass. Deep emerald blades stretch far all around him, pointing to the stale sky. All he has now is huddled stars and a waning moon. His profile is bruised by the frosty light.

But thankfully the blank grass soon holds footsteps and George smiles softly. He rests his chin atop the knees pressed to his chest and listens.

"What're you doing out here?" Dream calls.

George suppresses a wider grin, finding Dream as he answers teasingly, "You made it."

The silhouette of faraway trees and the whisper of gentle wind cushions them in the uncertainty of night. Reminds them they're alone, safe, together. Warmth is pressed to George's cheekbones.

"Yeah, your directions were pretty vague, so thanks for that." Dream reaches him, only a foot of distance between them now. There's a spark to his troubled glower, and George knows he finds as much thrill in this as he does. "What are you doing?"

George merely sticks his withering cigarette between his lips again and motions vaguely to the spot in front of him. "Sit down."

Dream watches him for a moment, wary, before he leans down and steals the cigarette. George beams as Dream lands before him, legs crossed and smoke spilling from his tongue.

"How are you," George murmurs warmly, following the lines of Dream's face as if they deserve to be framed. His mind melts. The corners of Dream's lips rise.

"I'm...good," light shock brushes his eyes, "Why, how are you?"

George buries his smile in his arms and nods quietly. Flaring adoration tempts the security of his ribcage.

"Did something happen, or," Dream hovers, George reads solace and caution on his skin, "Do you just really like Central Park."

George breathes a small laugh. He unwraps his arms from his knees as the cigarette falls back into his possession, a slight shrug unbalancing his exterior, "Just wanted air."

Embers hiss within the paper and tobacco finds home on George's tongue. Dream watches where ash falls from his mouth and waits as it impairs the black of the sky.

"And what am I doing here?" he asks.

George's stomach folds though he doesn't show it, instead puts on a collected face. "What *are* you doing here," he deflects. It only receives narrowed eyes and a discontented hum.

George steals another inhale of smoke as he studies the line of Dream's neck. Strong where it descends into sharp collarbones, a murky bruise peeking out from beneath his sweatshirt. His gaze descends to Dream's hands, carved with veins and knuckles. How he's held George, known George.

"Can I ask you something?" George offers carefully. Dream hesitates before he nods, and muted nerves ripple George's stomach, "Do you remember the first night we were together?"

It presses a hint of surprise to Dream's features. He traces George's face tentatively, answers lowly, "Yeah."

The nerves melt into a dull pit. George folds the answer over and over again in his mind, fits it into place. "And I did kiss you first?"

Dream hesitates again. He watches George timidly, glazed and startled irises. Maybe recalling the moment, which makes George's lungs unsteady. George pulling him in, pupils distant, liquor loud. Dream falling into the rhythm of lush lips, giving in to the melody.

"Yeah."

The both of them chasing wild whims. What was George thinking, then. What had he known. How did he slip.

"Why?" George presses.

"What?"

"Why'd I kiss you."

Dream frowns, shakes his head softly, "I don't know. We were fighting, and you just...did."

Fighting. They fought, before, consistently. Now George wonders how he ever stood to see Dream that way. The boy feels so inviting when he's calm. Graceful when he exists.

From where he sits, the crescent moon gets caught in Dream's eyes. The sliver of moonlight is stark against shadowed viridian irises. Tangled lashes dip into freckles, stray strands of shaggy blonde hair just barely scraping the patches on his cheekbones, too. And pretty pink lips sit flat in waiting.

"Well," he mumbles, stomach sinking at the proximity of his confession to something dangerous, "I'm glad."

His pulse quickens as Dream pauses.

"You're glad?"

"I'm glad that I kissed you."

Dream's lips light with a shy smile while George's chest catches fire. He leans forward, chin falling to rest on George's knee and hand wrapping around the boy's leg. He peers up at George through thick lashes, asks through his look alone.

"No," George mumbles, smothering a grin.

Dream's eyes narrow and he tugs on George's leg, "Come on, it would be so romantic out here."

The foreign word bubbles hope in George's stomach. He tries profusely to bat it away. "No, you're dumb," he repeats, nose scrunched.

The cigarette fixes between his lips again. Dream pouts, poking George's stomach, "Kiss me."

Smoke pours from George's mouth along with a heartfelt and unwilling laugh. He pushes Dream's hand away, huffs a flustered, "Hey." So Dream's hand settles again, this time over George's thigh.

"*George.*"

"Shut up, no," George persists. "You're tacky. And obnoxious."

"Fine," Dream mutters, smile still intact even though he tries to suppress it. He untangles from George and leans back on his palms, not without stealing the cigarette for himself. George stares at him, his easy features, his slow inhale of tobacco before the roll is planted in the grass again. And he's so pretty and has George wrapped so perfectly around his finger that of *course* he gives in.

He gives in, pushes forward and steers Dream's chest backward with so much buoyancy stashed within his own. Dream catches his hips and with a ridiculously gorgeous laugh, lands in the emerald and dew-kissed grass, catching George's lips too. The cigarette vanishes somewhere beside them, possibly already sinking into the soil. George doesn't think about it.

Dream has his entire mind. George is *maddened* by this notion. Dream kisses him like they're in a fairytale. George wishes they'd never end.

He's rolled onto his back, one final giggle smushed against his lips from Dream's giddy lungs. The grass cradles him kindly, almost like it knows how much this yearning weakens him.

Dream turns over onto his side so that his eyes set on George again. His voice dances across the night sky, low as he murmurs, "You're an idiot."

George meets his gaze, Dream's eyes lax though flammable still. The boy reaches out to tuck a loose strand of hair behind George's ear, though as he pulls away George catches his hand. To keep his eyes on Dream's palm and knuckles and graceful fingers hurts a whole lot less than matching his soft gaze, so George sticks to it. He twists and traces Dream's dainty rings and pursues the lines he holds in his palm.

"The guys want to go out tomorrow," Dream comments, "Supposed to be a good party."

"Are you going?" George asks.

"If you are."

George's mind wavers but quickly stumbles to the side of Dream wasting the night with him. Bringing him drinks, holding him at the edge of the room, kissing him, dancing with him. Come as

a pair.

"Sounds fun," he answers.

"I'm surprised Sapnap didn't tell you about it already."

Thick guilt settles low in George's stomach. He swallows.

"We're..." he shakes his head vaguely, "Fighting, right now. I guess."

Dream's frown is practically audible. "Why?"

Jagged nerves twist George's stomach. He bites the inside of his cheek, drags a line over the heel of Dream's hand, "You."

Timidly, George meets Dream's gaze. The boy's eyes weep concern, maybe guilt, too.

"Don't lose Sapnap over me," he murmurs. It riddles George with fragility. He lets go of Dream's hand as he looks to the sky.

"I won't," he mutters.

"George."

"I know."

He blinks at the stars, wills them to align. A thumb scrapes down his jaw.

"Sapnap cares a lot about you."

George grits his teeth.

"I know."

If he could escape to the sky or use it to blanket him, sit on the ledge of the moon for a little. Find any quick hiding place. Or if every constellation fell from the roof of their world and landed upon his skin.

If they were made from his decisions, would he be left with stitches or scars.

And which would Dream be among.

Chapter End Notes

Phew.

Hello hello! I'm sorry it's been so long haha motivation has been difficult in general and a bunch of things got in the way soo sorry BUT I've been itching to write the next chapter since I started this story so I think it'll come quicker (hopefully) :]

I hope you enjoyed this chapter, leave a kudos if you want, comments make me really happy, AND LOOK AT [THIS FANART](#) because it encapsulates George & Dream's energies so perfectly and I love it.

Eclipse

Chapter Summary

The risk rings true.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Night comes around again, this one with the promise of neon lights, alcohol, and a packed house. Sapnap seems excited enough about it, striding from corner to corner of the room as he gets ready, or maybe he's just relieved he won't have to spend another night in the hostile silence of their room. George is excited—and a bit relieved—too, however unlike Sapnap he sticks to his bed. Primarily for fear of getting in the boy's way.

George hasn't spoken a word to him since their fight. Sapnap has barely spared a glance in his direction. George does his best not to think too much about it.

The boy silently disappears into the bathroom, inarguably about to douse himself with pungent products, when the screen of George's phone lights up. He finds his mood promptly lifted at the name labeling the message.

I'm here.

Tell Sapnap too.

George tucks his bottom lip between his teeth as his thumbs admit, *I'm not ready yet*. It only takes a moment for the message to receive a response.

You're an idiot why not.

I don't know.

He leaves his phone on his chest, beside his heart as he listens to the drum and clatter of Sapnap juggling different items. He looks to the pale wall and icicle lights strung across it and unsuccessfully wills himself to get up. Something about knowing Sapnap's in the other room keeps him stuck to the mattress.

His phone buzzes, the vibration echoing through his ribcage.

I'm coming up.

Panic and subtle elation tense his features.

What?

George doesn't receive an answer this time. Sapnap enters the room once again, hair scolded into place and skin perfumed. George scrunches his nose at the waft he gets.

The words bubble in his throat, the ones that should let Sapnap know that their friends wait outside, Dream's car nestled against the curb. But they stick there, glued down by dread and he

can't bring himself to let them burst the overwhelmingly silent air.

So George says nothing, returns to the battle between his frantic mind and paralyzed body. Nothing warrants tearing himself from the hug of his pillows and pitiful warmth of his blankets.

When a knock inevitably rattles his door, Sapnap seems confused at the least. His eyes lift to the place where the noise sounded from, narrowed and greyed. George, however, feels delight begin to gnaw at his chest.

He finally pulls himself from the bed, ignoring the cold of Sapnap's gaze on his back as he pursues the door, more so the guest that lies beyond it. Fingers curled around the cool brass of the doorknob, he tugs it open.

Dream, of course, looks gorgeous. The soft hallway light splashes his features with warm pastels, the reverence in his eyes sending fever down George's spine. His shoulders are suffocated by layers, a black hoodie underneath his—and at one point George's—worn leather jacket. He raises his brows at the state of George; still in sweatpants and hair astray. As he steps into the room he catches George's hands and locks their fingers.

"You fucking idiot," George's hands are lifted from his side to hover by his shoulders, Dream leaned over him as an attempted reprimand pours from grinning lips, "You're not even *dressed*. You know Karl and Q are waiting downstairs?"

George bites back his own smile, lips pursed. His chest floods with chrome hues.

"Hey—"

"I'll go wait with them," Sapnap announces from deeper into the room.

George's eyes fall from Dream's face at the sharp tone, avoiding, and he holds his breath. Dream, light surprise bewildering his features, finds where Sapnap stands by his bed. Though soon the boy is starting toward the door.

"Sure," Dream answers cleanly, like he's dealing with a ticking bomb. His hands fall to George's waist and his towering figure feels like a shield, "We'll be right down."

Sapnap's gone before he utters the final syllable, door pulled shut under the command of his fingertips. The sound of wood falling into place reverberates through the room for a moment, George folding his lips ashamedly.

Dream's gaze lands on George again, expecting. George winces.

"You didn't talk to him?" Dream asks, eyes vaguely pained.

George releases the breath he'd been holding, scowling. "No."

He turns away, sights set on the dresser tucked against the right wall. His fingers begin to dig through a now-open drawer.

"He's just being dramatic."

Footsteps drag against fading carpet, "George—"

"Can we not talk about this?" he steals a plain bundle of the clothes from the dresser, too careless and too late to pick out anything nicer, "I'm already running late."

“It’s fine,” Dream mutters, “It’s not like they can leave without us. I’m the one driving.”

George begins tearing away his sweatpants and ratty t-shirt, replacing them as he does. When he turns again, Dream’s irises are melting wax, his pupils the amber flame. George glares and heads for the bathroom.

“Really?”

A heartfelt laugh chases after him, Dream fitting into the doorway. George reaches for his toothbrush.

“You’re so *pretty*, George,” he drones.

George says nothing, the honeyed tone lulling liquid gold through his system. Dream’s fingertip prods George’s side before it sneaks under the hem of his shirt. It paints a stripe up to his ribs and down again, a shiver setting on George’s skin.

“I’m going to ruin you tonight,” Dream mumbles.

George’s stomach jumps though he merely glowers and bats Dream’s hand away, muttering, “Says who,” through a mouthful of toothpaste. He sticks his toothbrush under the faucet and ducks his head over the sink as he orders, “Go get me the grey hoodie from Sapnap’s side.”

With a venomous smile, Dream disappears into the dimmer room, “Why are you wearing Sapnap’s hoodie?” he calls.

George reaches for a hand towel, “I don’t have any oversized ones.”

“Aren’t you guys fighting? And you’re gonna wear his hoodie?”

“He barely wears it anyway, it might as well be mine,” George asserts. Dream doesn’t say anything more.

He finishes his sparse routine in the time it takes Dream to return, hoodie in hand. Though it’s not grey. George’s narrowed eyes leave the black fabric to find Dream’s beaming face, the boy thoroughly proud, “Are you serious?”

Dream shrugs, “Brand new oversized hoodie.”

George rolls his eyes but nevertheless, steals the piece from Dream’s grip. He enters the bedroom again, “You’re so fucking clingy.”

Dream chuckles, following him out the door. “Maybe I just think black looks better on you.”

While George stills in front of the full-length mirror, Dream settles on the foot of his bed, watching George throw the hoodie on and fix his hair into place.

It’s snug enough on Dream to fit nicely on George. The fabric kisses his palms and scarcely reaches the top of his thighs. It’s warm, sort of lights his skin on fire in the sense that it feels like a hug to soothe his racing thoughts. Where he is with Dream, where he is with Sapnap, whatever Karl and Quackity think of him, it’ll work.

One day, it’ll work.

A finger finds his belt loop and tugs him sideways. George catches Dream’s shoulders as he crawls onto the boy’s lap, head full. But he smiles youthfully, beautifully, because Dream looks at him

like they mean everything.

George wraps his arms around Dream's waist, feels arms cradle him in return, and rests his chin atop Dream's shoulder. Blue finds its way into George's bloodstream. He isn't sure what feels so off.

"You okay?" Dream whispers.

His voice feels like it could mend anything with just one syllable. George tucks his face into Dream's neck.

"Mhm," his own voice is faint.

"Don't worry too much about Sapnap," Dream murmurs, "He'll forgive you. He cares too much to let you go."

The pads of his fingers dance up and down George's back, ghostly. Like he's fading.

"You can forget about it for one night."

George sinks; into Dream's hoodie, into Dream's arms. They'll soon be swapping these soft fluorescents for something harsher. He'll let alcohol crawl through his system, Dream's teeth declare patterns in his skin, and he'll forget about it for tonight.

"This is weird," George muses, lifting his head. He meets Dream's gaze with quiet amusement twisting his lips, "I haven't been to a party since we started..." he huffs a small laugh, "This shit-show."

He catches the words once they've already left. Dream's face is instantly warped.

Panic climbs in George's chest.

No.

His eyes are sad. They're *sad*, skin paling with fatal realization.

Take it back, George pleads. His lips say nothing.

Dream breathes a plastic laugh that never reaches his eyes and George feels the loss of vitality in his lungs. His voice is flat; George feels that, too, devastate him.

"We should go," he says, "They're waiting on us."

George blinks, eyes falling. He pulls himself from Dream's lap and feels the hoodie settle heavy on his shoulders, burning his arms. Jaw clenched, they head for the door.

It's the last time Dream speaks to him that night.

-

The ride is bitter. While Dream drives, Sapnap is his passenger, and the two of them say nothing. The void is only filled by Karl and Quackity's bickering, which he's sure they're all thankful for.

George is pushed against the window to watch the world go by.

Then they arrive, and that's possibly worse. Because now they're all happy, they're all happy except for George. Karl and Quackity immediately disappear into the crowd together, as bouncy as always. Sapnap mutters a few scattered comments to Dream when they enter, which Dream answers with a raw and brilliant smile and a few vibrant laughs. And then Sapnap slips toward wherever the drinks are, ambition seemingly in mind, and Dream wanders to another room, the one that's packed. He leaves George alone.

George stands before the doorway, stuck, watching people go by and his friends vanish. And he feels it nauseate him, so violent within the hollow of his ribcage, George feels alone.

So he drifts toward the alcohol. The air is thick, elbows and shoulders nudging his small figure whenever people pass by. It smells like sweat and lust and abandoned burdens. George steals a bottle of beer, eager to press it to his lips. The pungent taste washes down his throat and begins the daunting task of stealing his senses.

The rooms are all blue, George notices as he wanders. They all have blue air. Some are greener than others, turquoise or cyan instead of sapphire. They're all dark, the night sneaking through the windows. It bruises every face under the roof. In certain angles, George can see the sweat clinging to their foreheads and the alcohol left on their lips, opalescent compared to the shadows.

He finds people to talk to, though none of them stick for very long. There's something off about all of them, George can't decide what that is. They seem too interested in him, or maybe they're not interested enough. They talk about themselves a lot. They talk a lot, or maybe too little, or maybe George just can't listen enough. Maybe George doesn't care enough. Maybe it's George, George is the problem.

Dream, he needs *Dream*.

He drains his first beer, though it doesn't have the effect he hoped it would have. He doesn't feel relieved, his head just feels heavy. His chest is louder, his skin tingles. Maybe it's the stupid hoodie.

Maybe a second beer would fix it. George doesn't remember where he got the first one from, the crowds and stale dark air too disorienting. He walks idly toward where his safe hallway splits into two rooms. George glances down each side though they both look the same, all people. A maze of greedy fingers and alcohol-perfumed bodies, their necks damaged. George sighs and strays from the busy corridor, squeezing into the right room.

It's hot, the space overflowing. One side of the room is crammed with swaying bodies, scarlet ropes biting their wrists and hips, every lopsided head visibly dazed. George glares red at the scene as he keeps pushing through the room.

He finds another promising beer stashed within dissolving ice. The condensation is fierce against his melting skin, briefly providing relief from the heat the walls trap them in. He turns again, finds the mob of happy dancers *again*.

One of them reminds him of Dream. Dirty blond waves messed up and fallen into his eyes from sweat and his caved neck. A raven t-shirt sticks to his skin, the fabric dented by a vague impression of muscles. His arms are toned, too. And all that George can see of his face are parted and licked lips exhaling soft breaths.

George frowns and tips a sip of beer onto his tongue, melancholy rushing down with it. He

shouldn't be staring.

The boy lifts his head for a split second and George catches a glimpse of his other features. Distaste hesitantly touches his system and as George squints through the distance and the dark to see the boy's eyes again, his throat closes.

It *is* Dream. Holding a pretty girl's hips, following their rhythm, one palm slipping up her front just as he presses his lips to her pretty pulse.

He looks unreal. All wound and drunk, gorgeously disheveled and dim gold. His hands and his mouth move with practice. George notices when he bares his teeth and sinks them into the pliant skin.

George's hands are numbed as he tears his bruised pupils away, and he has to pay extra mind when he goes to set his drink down. It's left on the surface of a wooden table to be discarded later. Where does he go from here.

A pile of hopeless copper weighs on his wishing-well heart but George pays more attention to his lungs. They cling desperately to absolute vacancy. He just needs a way out of this dense room.

He sees Dream's hands again touching her, wanting *her*. George learns how unfairly painful it is to lose something he never even had.

God, if Dream was just his.

If she had never stumbled into this stupid fucking party. If George was her. If he was *good enough*. Why the fuck does it feel like this, why does it crush him when he *knows* this is what he signed up for.

George reaches the hallway again, fingers curling around the door frame as he glances down each end. His heart sighs at the familiar face he finds.

"Hey," George exhales as he approaches Quackity, "Have you seen Sapnap?"

His eyes lift, light and kind and George feels sweet alleviation seep into his chest. "No, I haven't," his brows tense slightly, "You okay?"

George provides a faux smile, nodding, "Yeah, I just—I think I'm gonna head out. I'm not really feeling it anymore."

"Oh, okay," his voice is wired with concern, "Do you want me to come with you? I don't mind—"

"Don't worry about it," George consoles, shaking his head as a lump swells in his throat, "You have fun. Just tell Sapnap I'm getting a cab home."

"Yeah," Quackity nods, "Sure."

George sends him a final assuring smile before he turns away. It slips instantly from his face.

He waits a while on the sidewalk. It's freezing out, the black sky providing no warmth and the moon simply watching where he shivers and frowns at the pavement. He wraps his arms around his stomach and holds himself together, wishing it was Dream holding him while he pretends he doesn't.

His irises are worn to grey by exhaustion and grief. But he enjoys, at least, the company of the sparse street lights that disappear up the road. They're soft fluorescents punishing a pessimistic street, piercing the loneliness of the night. And he likes the trees that sit across the road from him, fading into some quiet forest. Sometimes George has to squeeze his side to remind himself he's not just another idle being stuck to this street.

He crawls into the cab gladly when it arrives, the warmth new. He murmurs a polite hello to the driver and smiles as best he can. He's happy to plunge into the violent darkness of the backseat.

The hug of fabric doesn't feel so loving anymore. It wears him down, whispers into his skin that this isn't for him. It doesn't fit anymore. The pressure of the cotton reminds him of this. George looks out the window and ignores it.

A blur of satin sapphire sky, green lights, and silver infrastructure fill the glass. It washes over his face, the stretch of skin blued.

He wishes he could bury it in Sapnap's shoulder and fall into the ease of their soft-spoken conversations. He *misses* it. It feels like it's been so long since he really talked to Sapnap, let him know he cares.

The stars fall from their shelf and find home on George's lashline. He clings to himself as they escape and drop crystals on his cheeks, running down the slope of his face like they're chasing his pulse. He catches the scent of smoke and vanilla when he wipes at his tainted face with a black sleeve.

This is what he wanted. This is what he was promised. Danger, wasn't that it? What he chased, what he declared whole-heartedly that he desired. When did he lose that, when Dream started treating him like someone valuable? When he started stupidly *feeling*, where did he think that would get him? When did he stop believing that the danger would catch up to him?

Sure, he did this to himself. George is gullible, he's hopeless. He *asked* for this. Dream probably didn't think twice about it. And he'll fall asleep in the boy's hoodie anyway, pillowcase catching his tears, because the solitude's too violent for him to care.

-

George wakes early. The sun has just returned to its pedestal, the song of birds wafting in through the window. He stays in his bed for long, though, simply staring at their pale walls. It's primarily dread that keeps him bathing in young sunlight and wrapped in clean white sheets. He's not even sure what he would do if he got up, anyway, there's nowhere to be.

He didn't wake earlier than Sapnap, though. George notices the boy's shoes and jacket from last night have been discarded by the foot of his bed, but Sapnap remains gone. George wonders what dawning plans have him so ambitious, especially after a night out.

And where did Dream end up last night. Does he lay now in his bed, under the sun too. Hangover softening his bones, mind jumbled and thoughts spinning with George. Or did he hook up with her after George had long disappeared and move on completely.

George curls in on himself, skin washed white, hair disarrayed. His tongue still tastes like beer. He should get out of bed. George has no desire to take care of himself when he could stay cradled by

his comforter instead.

It reaches noon before George tears himself from the pillows. He decides he'll brush his teeth and that a shower will wait until a little later. So he carries himself to the bathroom and flicks the brutal light on. He stares at his reflection and the stupid jumbo sweatshirt swallowing his figure.

Clean tongue, clean teeth, and George returns to his room. He sits at the edge of his bed, somberly watches Sapnap's empty one.

I need my friend back, George thinks blankly.

He tugs the hoodie from his shoulders and bitterly tosses it to the floor, alone again.

Somebody.

George swaps his clothes for fresh ones. His skin feels better, lighter, and then he settles on his bed again.

The door isn't opened until later. The sound wakes George's senses, his gaze following it tentatively to the wallowing archway. Sapnap is invited in.

For the first time in too long, his eyes land on George. They're careful, cautious. Nerves swell in George's stomach alongside hope. Sapnap clicks the door shut behind him.

"Hey."

We're talking, George wonders, breath clipped.

You're talking to me.

He searches Sapnap's face, eyes wide and fearful, "Hi."

Sapnap swallows and his features are so painfully gentle George wonders what he's thinking.

"You left early last night."

The prompt fills George's mind with solemn alarm. He frowns. "Um, yeah, I just...I didn't feel well."

Sapnap nods quietly, gaze too pitiful from where he stands and George's chest begins to feel strained, breaths deep.

"How do you feel," Sapnap asks, "Today?"

George's eyes fall as he shrugs, "Fine."

Sapnap finally moves from the door and George's veins ignite when he strays toward George's side of the room. Sapnap lands on the bed beside him.

The boy's proximity gnaws at his heart, every apology he's rewritten in his head and every plead for his best friend back crawling to the surface of his mind. But the way Sapnap fidgets with his hands in his lap keeps him unsure.

"I talked to Karl," he says, meeting George's eyes and his own *sorry*. Waves of binding fear crash and swell in George's chest as Sapnap speaks steadily, "He said he saw Dream with someone else last night. He wanted to know if you were okay."

Humiliation and panic claw stripes into George's insides. His lips part but no words are able to fall through his stupor.

He should've known he could never hide something like this, if he was ever even hiding it at all.

George huffs a solemn laugh as he glances at his lap, "They've always known, haven't they?"

"I don't think you ever really made an effort to keep it a secret," Sapnap answers amusedly.

George forces a tight smile, his skeleton heavy. When Sapnap pulls him into his side George melts into it, safe under Sapnap's arm. His wired jaw begins to grow sore.

"You can say I told you so," George muses mournfully. Sapnap scoffs.

"Shut up, George."

"I'm sorry," George whispers, head fitting into place against his best friend's shoulder, "I didn't mean to push you away."

"You're alright," Sapnap murmurs. The soft air cushions their fragile figures kindly. "You know I didn't mean what I said, right?" Sapnap adds.

George shrugs, blinking in an attempt to clear the weakness from his eyes, "It's fine, you were right anyway."

Sapnap looks down at him, a reprimand to his look. When he notices the gloss exhausting wounded brown irises, he frowns and pulls George in again.

"Dream's a fucking asshole," he mumbles. George laughs quietly to placate Sapnap's stirring worry but buries his face all the same.

He wants desperately to clear the blame from Dream's record in his own conscience. To keep the memory intact of a gentle-hearted creature, a boy who wouldn't do something so heedless. And who wouldn't hurt George, whether he meant to or not, after promising George that safety.

The blame is George's. He wants to take it. Even though the guilt that comes with it, with trusting too easily streaks his cheeks with rose watercolor. He's left a shattered painting, a teardrop for each prayer of devotion on his rosary.

-

George slumps into his hoodie, chasing any warmth and haven, throat sticky and frown tragic. His stomach folds with turmoil at the discussion at hand. The room feeds his heart pale hues and wistful memories. George is already sick of being sad.

"I just don't get it," Sapnap huffs, "It's not like him at all."

George shrugs, shoulder blades digging into the wall, "I think so."

Endless nights of boisterous bars and house parties echo in his skull, Dream lusting in every one.

"He used to jump from person to person all the time. Maybe it's just time he moved on," George

mutters.

“It’s not the same, though,” Karl denies, “I mean, you guys were a consistent thing.”

George runs his tongue over the back of his teeth as recent memories play. Dream not moving on, Dream chasing, *standards that you meet*. First dates that George believed meant he cared.

“He would’ve talked to you about it if he wanted to move on.”

He glances to the carpet floor while splinters scathe his sternum and he shakes his head, “We never talked about that stuff.”

He swallows thick regret.

“I do think he was acting weird on the way there, though,” Quackity voices, “Did he say anything to you guys?”

“No, I mean, it could’ve been nothing,” Sapnap answers, “He seemed fine once we got there. And he *definitely* seemed fine before we left, he was happier than ever when he came up to our room.”

Soft pink lips wilt downward remembering Dream’s excitement in the familiar dorm and George’s heart splitting at the seams.

“Did anything happen after I left, George?”

He inhales, searing guilt charring his vocal cords. His lips part and his eyes fall from the ones that watch him as his feet bounce heel to toe nervously.

“Um, yeah, I...” he sighs, looking up again, “I accidentally said something I probably shouldn’t have and I think he got upset.”

Sapnap’s brows knit together, “What? What’d you say?”

Dream’s sunken face crawls back to the forefront of his mind. Fangs puncture the inside of George’s cheek, “Called us a shit-show.”

Sapnap pauses, observing George for a moment with gnawing eyes before he turns back to the two sitting on the bed in front of him. They all share a look, something like apprehension. George’s guilt sets deeper.

“Maybe I’m overreacting,” George reasons, desperate to move on from the subject, “It’s not like we were ever official or anything. Dream can do what he wants.”

“No way, with the way things were going for you two, what Dream did was definitely fucked up,” Sapnap insists, eyes firm.

“Well, maybe he didn’t want it to ‘go’ anymore,” George says, harsher, “I’m telling you, he’s probably just over it.”

“That’s not it,” Sapnap demands.

George sighs, pressing his skull into the drywall. He stares at the ceiling grimly while Sapnap continues to debate within himself.

“I don’t *get it*, I don’t see why he would ever do what he did.”

“He was just mad, Sapnap,” Quackity reminds, “You know how he acts out sometimes when he’s hurt.”

George frowns softly at that. He hurt Dream, he must have. If anything he deserves this.

“But even then, why would he do something this stupid when it would obviously ruin his chances with George,” Sapnap rambles, “I mean, after how long he waited?”

George’s eyes slip from the ceiling. Where they land, Quackity and Karl dagger Sapnap with heavy glares. Sapnap falls quiet, folding his lips.

The walls are poured pale blue and suffocating, air void of sound.

“What do you mean?” George asks.

Karl kneads at his forehead, exhaling into his palm while Quackity merely swallows and shifts uncomfortably in his seat. The disappointment is tangible and George clings to it with a bundle of nerves.

“Sapnap,” Karl grumbles.

“Hey, I lasted two years, that’s the best you’re gonna get from me,” the boy defends, wagging a finger at the other two.

“Sapnap,” George demands.

“Alright, fine! Listen—”

“Sapnap,” Quackity scolds.

“No, no, you know what? I think George has a right to know,” Sapnap declares, sending them a pointed look, “I’m sick of this charade, you are all fucked up and *I* am going to fix it.”

“You are *not* going to fix this—”

“Yeah, well, Dream’s in some pretty deep shit right now and I don’t see how this could make things any worse.”

“He’s gonna kick your ass, I’m serious. You made a promise.”

“You know he was never gonna tell George, anyway,” Sapnap urges, “And you know George should know.”

“Know *what*—”

“You’re taking all of the blame for this,” Karl comments sharply, a warning.

“Alright, that’s fine,” Sapnap shrugs, poise lining his stature, “I can handle Dream. If anything, he’s gonna thank me.”

“Sapnap,” George implores, nerves welling in his chest, “What is it?”

Sapnap sends the pair a final, reassuring look before turning to George. George stares back earnestly, the ceiling resting heavily on his shoulders and numerous black pupils killing his skin.

George feels the seconds pass by like they’re everlasting, impatience only adding to his knotted

chest. Even through Sapnap's benign lips and the distance between them, the words are still red-hot.

Where will he go from here.

"He's liked you for years, George."

Chapter End Notes

I'm too lazy to do notes but thank you for reading & all the lovely comments, let me know what you think of this chapter!! :)

Also you can follow me on Twitter if you want [@yungluvXD](https://twitter.com/yungluvXD)

Exile

Chapter Summary

"We both knew this wouldn't end well when we started."

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

In all the time that he's known Dream, they've always kept a careful balance of dull witty remarks and true sharp conflict. The years were mostly made up of George receiving sarcasm and aimed jabs, a few flirty taunts on occasion, though there were of course times where it dissolved into dense arguments. They would fight, then move on after a few days. George always assumed it was the simple distaste they held for each other that never let them get along. That Dream found George as insufferable as George found him.

Where, within the folds of their inharmonious relationship, did Dream find the strength to care for him?

How could he want George, yearn for the possession of his heart, when all George had was hate for him. When all George did was meet him with caustic pupils and words that bled from fangs onto his tongue, spiked with venom. Where had Dream found the energy to want him when it was clear George would never feel the same way.

And if George had only started wanting recently and yet found it so mercilessly painful, found the sight of Dream with someone else haunting the caverns of his heart, then how did Dream feel. After *years*, when all they did was fight, when George stumbled into the arms of other guys so often while Dream watched, and then listened when George told his friends of the person he'd met and adored.

And how did George miss it. Why did Dream bury it so deeply and so convincingly and force George to look away.

It overwhelms the boundaries of his skull as George swallows, inhales, glances from wall to wall.

"Years?" he asks. They nod slowly. "As in the two that I've known him?" Another synced set of nods. "And all of you knew?"

Sapnap pauses. "Yeah."

George looks to the side, lays his fingertips against his lips as he shakes his head, "That doesn't make sense, Dream was a—a *dick* to me."

Sapnap sighs, "I don't know, George—"

"You don't *know*?"

"I don't know, maybe it was his way of coping."

George's lips part, eyes frantically scattered across the room as his chest rises, "What does that

even *mean*?"

All of their worried gazes pin him down, the pair across from Sapnap far too quiet.

"You never liked him back," Sapnap reminds gently.

"That doesn't make sense."

Sapnap's lips lie solemnly flat, irises full. "Dream's never been good at taking pain," he mumbles.

George stares, Quackity's voice echoing.

You know how he acts out sometimes when he's hurt.

"What—" he inhales shakily, "How did—"

The time they spent together where Dream sat with him, hugged him, held his hand, spoke to him softly, showed him his favorite songs, it was all Dream fulfilling years worth of wishes. It wasn't empty. Dream cared.

"I mean, did he *really* like me?" George asks on a breath.

"Considering he held onto it for years, yeah," Quackity finally contributes.

"But—but what did he say, like—like did he want a relationship? It was—it was romantic, not just sexual? Like he really wanted to be with me, not just some crush, or, or a fling?"

"He didn't like to talk about it much," Sapnap murmurs, "But yeah, I think so."

"Well—" George's heart falls to the party, to Dream wanting someone else, "Then maybe that's it, maybe it wasn't what he thought it would be."

Sapnap frowns, "What?"

George fidgets with his fingers, "He had me. We were pretty close to—" his arteries burn, "Maybe I wasn't what he thought I would be."

Sapnap's features are mellowed by a sad chord. "No, George, I don't—I don't think so. He was really happy when you guys started hanging out."

"Then maybe he just got over me," George decides, "Two years is a long time to hold onto someone. It's probably time he moved on."

Karl shakes his head, his look wary, "If anything, George, I think he was going the other way."

The notion breaks George's heart. Their silent dates and sneaky visits all piling up, all lulling Dream closer until the light that touched his eyes spun George wild. *God*, if George had that, if it's really the truth.

"Then why'd he do that," George whispers.

The conversation falls, landing a blue expanse of cloud on the carpet floor. They wait for an answer none of them have. None of them have the energy to debate it anymore, either.

Their quiet is broken when Sapnap retrieves his phone from his pocket, face blank as he reads the screen. He types something out quickly before it's tucked away again.

"What am I supposed to do," George mutters, "How am I supposed to see him again?"

"You have to talk to him, George," Quackity answers firmly.

"Yeah, but—I don't even know how to talk to him anymore. Everything's so different, now."

Dream no longer feels like the safest person he could turn to, no longer feels like *his*, and the loss crushes George.

"He never said anything to you guys about losing feelings?" George asks lowly.

"Last time I talked to him he was still pretty hung up on you," Sapnap answers.

"When was that?"

The boy shrugs, "About a month ago. It was after one of your little dates, he was asking me for help."

"And what'd you say?"

"I told him to talk to you," Sapnap says, half-bitterly, "Nobody ever listens to my advice, though. Would've saved us a lot of trouble, but..."

George rolls his eyes, though regret silently seeps into his bloodstream still. If he could go back, even to just two nights ago.

The doorknob rattles on the other side of their wall. Their eyes leap to it immediately, George's stomach spiking with nerves while his eyes set with startled confusion.

"Why's the door locked?" Dream calls. The voice steals George's breath instantly.

Avoided, the bane of his precarious composure, somebody he'd sooner forget than lose.

"Who told him we were here?" George hisses, turning back to the group.

Karl shakes his head, "He texted me but I ignored it."

"Me too," Quackity says.

They look to Sapnap, who remains quiet.

"Okay, how was I supposed to know he was going to *come* here?"

"Hello?" Dream complains, "Open the door."

George presses his hands to his eyes, stability fraying, "Sapnap, oh my *god*, you are so—"

"Guys?"

"Who's going to get it?" Sapnap asks urgently.

Panic rises in George's chest. "I don't want to see him," he pleads.

"We can't exactly send him away," Karl answers cautiously.

George's eyes widen, heart lurching, "*Guys—*"

The doorknob rattles again.

"Oh, for fucks sake," Sapnap grumbles, rising from his seat. George watches him stride toward the door, lungs wasted and nerves on fire.

The room is pried open. George's heart instantly drops. He looks away and folds his arms over his chest.

"Hey, Dream," Sapnap greets unsteadily. George squeezes his side as he waits for Dream's reply, the boy's timber voice.

"Hey," he murmurs, "No one was answering my texts."

It's clearer now, and right by George's side. A few feet away, Dream stands, skin still tainted. He sounds normal.

Normal. George *envies* him, falling apart himself.

You left me last night. You were with somebody last night.

He sounds fine.

"Way to take a hint," Sapnap mutters as he stumbles back toward the bed. Dream doesn't seem to notice.

"What're you guys doing here?" he asks cleanly.

"Oh, we were just hanging out," Sapnap's eyes flick over to George who sends him a pleading look, ribs hollow, "But you know what, I think I'm gonna head back to my dorm."

George's eyes widen, frantic and fearful, clutching to Sapnap's skin. Unease ruins his stomach.

"Yeah, I think we'll come with you," Karl agrees, standing from the bed and Quackity mirroring.

George swallows, glancing away as dread is added to his system. They all head toward the door and Dream seems about ready to follow.

"Okay," he says lowly, confusion clouding his voice. Sapnap pushes him back into the room.

"Not you," he instructs.

George glares back at him, which Sapnap answers with a reassuring and softly apologetic look. Then the door falls shut.

It's unbelievably quiet. George hears his heartbeat hammer through his skull, terrified and unsure. The pit in his stomach wells with swirling doom.

"What's going on?" Dream asks quietly. It's painful for George to hear his voice and know that it could still melt him. The frightened confusion weakening his voice is painful, too.

George doesn't answer, instead watches the floor while his legs go numb and the walls stack with tension, taking and taking from their lungs.

"George?"

He finally looks at Dream. The boy rubs at his knuckles anxiously, lips paling. His eyes declare

innocence. George would believe them if the image of their lust wasn't engraved in his mind. He looks away.

"Okay," he breathes as he tears himself from the wall, stepping further into the room. His voice shakes and his fingers begin to grasp desperately at his hair. He faces Dream again, the boy's face having fallen impossibly further, "Um, we...we have to talk."

"Talk?"

His gorgeous features are creased by fear. The porcelain face inebriates George more than it should.

"What are we doing," he forces himself to whisper.

"What?"

Months and months of ignored faults in the wires that capture them, responsible for spellbinding mornings and candescent nights spent together, finally unravel.

"What are you doing with me."

Dream inhales, gaze staining George's skin purple. "What—where is this coming from?"

At that, George huffs bitterly. A splinter scores his heart. "I'm trying to figure out if any of this means anything to you," he bites, "I'm trying to figure *you* out—"

"Me?" Dream thunders, bewildered, "What did *I*— "

"I don't get it, Dream. We slept together, started whatever the *hell* this was—" he watches pain flash across Dream's face, his aim successful, "—Then I fall for you, only to see you dancing with somebody else. And *then* I find out that you've liked me," he takes an unsteady breath, "For *years*."

Defense bolts Dream's eyes, his stature tensing as the words leave George's tongue. The endless wall of secrets he used to hold onto suddenly breaks, reaching his face in an array of fear and embarrassment. His lips part but before he says anything, his gaze drifts to the beds where their friends sat only moments ago. Their phantom shapes linger as Dream punishes the spot. He finds George again with a certain softness, voice brutally frail as he glances down at his fidgeting hands.

"You do like me," he whispers, teeming with sad wonder. It fractures George's heart.

"How come you never said anything," he murmurs, Dream's secret lethal to his weakening grudge.

Dream's eyes lift as he steps toward George, broken and glazed, "God, can you blame me?" he watches his own hands search desperately for a place to land, like he doesn't know how to hold George anymore, "You *hated* me, George."

They land with wilting familiarity on George's waist and pull him closer. George's trembling fingers kiss Dream's forearms, blind and hopeless as he holds them in place.

"*You* hated *me*," George counters. Dream's closeness washes him with a lovesick stupor and even though barely a day has passed, he's *missed* this, "You were supposed to."

He watches Dream's eyes sadden, his swollen pupils tired out from years of use. Still, they trace

George's face eternally.

"I never hated you," he answers, pained.

George swallows, eyes falling to dance along the boy's collarbones. "Then why'd you treat me like that," he mutters.

Dream falters, impaired by the liability.

"I was angry," he begs, "That I could find you so incredible yet you looked right past me."

Dream's eyes are too heavy, too much, so George follows his freckles instead. "And after? When we hung out every day, you didn't say anything then."

He feels Dream's exhale against his skin, blue and sweet. George meets his eyes again timidly.

"I was getting everything I wanted," Dream confesses, "*You*, I was getting you, George. I got to be with you, pretend it was real. I didn't want to mess that up, not after I waited so long for you."

George aches, Dream's look so tragic and devoted. He clutches at George tighter, melted eyes dipping into the cushion of George's lips.

When Dream inhales, his eyes turn cautious. George's subtly forgotten nerves stir.

"Then I got tired of waiting. Of—of pretending," Dream says, voice faint, "I wanted it to be real. I thought it was, and then—and then you called us a shit-show."

George bites his lip, irises glossed with disgrace.

"I mean, this means *everything* to me, George. I care so much about you. And then it felt like we were back where we started." Dream exhales, scouring George's somber skin and following the flutter of his graceful lashes. "I thought if you saw me with someone else, you would realize that you felt something for me."

George frowns, throat draining of air and words. His mind spins with the notion. Phantom fingers slip down and quietly tear Dream's touch away from him.

"You did it on purpose?" he accuses, an exhale of fatal realization falling with the words. Dream watches him take a step backward, eyes pleading and frightened. "You meant to hurt me," George reiterates.

"No, no, George—"

"Why didn't you just talk to me?" George scrapes, eyes violent. Dream watches the two of them separate with thinning breaths.

"I was scared that you wouldn't—"

George glares brutally, red scoring his chest. "Then you take that chance, Dream. But you would rather *me* get hurt because the thought of being rejected is too much for your ego to handle."

Dream's face is openly struck by pain and subtle horror. "*No*, I never wanted to hurt you," he begs, breathless.

"Well that's what you did," George thunders. He glances at the surrounding, far too near walls as flames lick his ribcage, "*God*, I mean—I could *never* be with someone else, not with the way I feel

about you."

Dream shakes his head, dangerously stepping forward again. He catches George's hands whose glaring embers remain.

"No, it wasn't like that," he defends desperately, face near again and George watches his eyes storm. The air depletes in their shared space, wiped entirely as Dream's lips part again, "Come on, you know I only love you."

The flame quiets as George shatters. He stares, horrified, breaths all knotted in the chambers of his lungs. He thought he would be happier to hear that.

"You can't say that," George breathes, voice so quiet it's nearly stolen by the thick air.

Room spinning, his chest rocks. He thought he wanted to hear that. If he had an ounce less self-respect George is sure that he would be stumbling blindly into Dream's arms by now. Had he taken it, the tragic attempt at salvation, would he be doing something better, or far worse, than bowing out right now.

"That doesn't *fix* anything."

Dream's face breaks, wounds across his freckles and severely glossing his eyes. He appears so exhausted, so lost, so hopeless, drowning in the fragments of what they used to be.

"Can it a little bit," he whispers, clutching tighter at George's palms, "I—I can't lose you, George."

George shakes his head, attempting to swallow the heavy breaths his chest offers. He looks away in an attempt to keep his voice still. "I—I can't be with someone who would hurt me like that."

When he finds Dream's face again, an iridescent pearl is making its way down the flawless plane of his cheek. George watches its path mournfully.

"I'm sorry," Dream's hollowed voice implores, "I'm so sorry. Don't throw this away because I did something stupid."

George's hand lifts mindlessly to fit around Dream's jaw. The cut of bone scars his palm, a reminder of how many times he's done this before to pull Dream in. George wipes away the escaped tear. *Don't make this harder than it already is*, his thumb whispers against the stained skin.

"What am I supposed to do, Dream," he whispers, wrapping his arms around himself as he pulls away again, "Just pretend like last night didn't happen? Be with you, and pretend like you didn't hold her the same way?"

"It's not the same," Dream pleads, "It's *you*, George. You—I waited for *you*."

George swallows, heart seared. "Then maybe you wasted your time."

Dream stares, wild green irises worn grey from loss. His hands are now empty, his head full of grief. George sees him as a stranger and he's sure he couldn't go back, even if he wanted to. The boy who lied and deceived for far too long, only to end up here.

"That's your answer, then?" he asks, voice firmer but face still delicate, "You're calling it?"

The venom washes through George's veins. He swallows nausea. He hasn't heard this grim voice

used against him in so long.

"We both knew this wouldn't end well when we started."

Dream watches, stuck, as George turns away and slips toward the door. The room weighs on their skulls, hurt prominently running through the air and mirroring where it courses through their veins.

"So you're just gonna put away feelings," Dream spits, one final attempt to draw George back in, "You're just gonna *forget* whatever the hell it is you have for me."

George's fingers still, pale champagne against the silver doorknob. He sends the boy a vile glare, finding his face weakened again, tears having spilled over the edge.

"You made it easy," George reminds, intending to wound, "I put them away as soon as I saw you with her."

Then he fades away, into the hallway, the final lie to protect himself. As soon as George shuts the door, his heart falls flat.

-

He doesn't see Dream for weeks. For countless days he wakes up alone, falls asleep alone, hugged by the cloak of the pitiful sky. Every day is pale and the same as the last, a blurred montage of schoolwork and his beige dorm. The alternative of spending time with his friends is flawed and consistently rejected, for Dream is always on the invitation. So he's lost to a solemn routine.

He falls inevitably into the spine of his notebook, a deadline looming. His newly-freed time is spent catching up on hours of lost work, the stripes and margins filling with every passing day. He sits at his desk, wearily staring at the ink dancing up and down his page, and asks Sapnap about morally grey characters. He ends up scratching out Dream's name entirely.

And with a sick and spent heart, George finds all of this more difficult than he thought it would be.

His lungs sink and suffocate with each thought of the boy.

Drowning, he doesn't see an end.

One night, when the world has turned black and the tar roads have quieted just a bit, George finds the silence more painful than usual. Like his skin is a pincushion.

The dorm lies empty as his friends sweep the city. George doesn't know how Dream does it, has the energy to still see his friends so often. To put on a face. Maybe it's a distraction, maybe he finds this easier than George does. George doesn't know how to get over someone.

So while he plunges into dove comforters, his mind tirelessly thinks. Remembering when he'd been here before, dwindling in the same bed but with benevolent and tangled limbs to keep him company. The quiet walls are deafening. A collection of sleepy and hollow murmurs thrown all at once at George, the cream wallpaper so nauseatingly soft-spoken that how could George think of anyone else. Months of whispered admirations and flower petal kisses that George wishes he could just stumble back to.

His eyes wander about the room and follow cruel phantom footsteps. From the door to his bed, the second time that George pulled him in and officially signed his contract of devotion, later demise. The ones stained in the spot before his mirror, where he'd obsessed over the appropriate appearance for their long list of fraudulent dates. By the window where he knew for the first time that he wanted to share every minor thing with him, in hopes that he would understand each as a subtle vow from George. And when his gaze stumbles upon and trips over the coil of wire discarded lazily on his bedside table, George sighs.

Dream's own subtle vow, what George hadn't picked up on soon enough.

His eyes linger, mind dwelling on their first meaningful affair. The whirring railroad and white lights. He wonders if Dream saw hope in their proximity that day, or if the need to make it count overran him with anxious calculation. If slipping George's hand into his for the very first time cured a small piece of his patient and worn heart. How *long* had he waited to do that? And when George softly pressed his fingertips to Dream's knuckles in response, did his heartbeat swell even quicker than before.

Did he find his familiar song absolutely *hypnotizing* after they shared the melody through a stagnant wire?

George looks away. His fingertips itch, poison ivy eyes taunting him in his memory, but George's mind spirals with alarm. He knows it'd only hurt, but he's heard it under another name before.

Closure. That's how you're supposed to get over someone, right?

He eyes the tangle of wire again and the device next to it. Just beneath the surface, their song lies ignored.

Socks land with a hushed echo on the carpet floor. The items are torn from their place on the wooden surface and shoved into George's pocket without another thought. George tugs his shoes on and grabs his coat with a blank face.

When he emerges from the building, the warmth is swapped for severe winter air. His cheeks are flushed scarlet but George merely spares a glance to the ebony sky, a breath escaping his lips in a dance of silver smoke, and keeps down the road.

Shadows settle on his porcelain skin and the lavender dips of his eye bags. His feet drag him where his mind begs him not to go, but George suppresses the warnings. His small figure is cradled by darkness as he wanders through the endless city.

He finds himself before the empty tracks of a restless train, sense long abandoned. His fingers drum by his side as he waits, vines curling through the gaps in his ribcage. When metallic doors finally settle and open before him, they choke his bones tighter.

George watches a few soles enter, passengers sparse due to the hour. Heart rapid, he surrenders to the cold off-white walls. The wires in his pocket bleach the fabric as he finds a place against the far end of the train.

George's leg bounces anxiously as he surveys the car. The gleaming poles impaling the floor, the quiet people tucked against the windows, the jarring ivory lighting, and the empty spot beside him. He swallows and decides to bring his knees to his chest.

Timidly, George draws his phone and earbuds from the cavern of his pocket. As he slots the florets into his ears, his screen lights up. Skittish fingers slide the device open and plague it with

commands, ones that take him to a deserted record. George doesn't notice when the subway doors close, but he presses play anyway and drops his phone with a shaky exhale.

Sorrow notes spill into his skull. They sit in solitude, bare of any supporting structure and starving for lucid nourishment. They're then hung to the night sky by effervescent chords. Graceful keys sing.

What do you think?

The quick drag of notes leaps through his hollow mind alongside velvet vocal cords. Ghostly fingers dance across his collarbones to the hazy peach tune. Long-faded lips brush the hinge of his jaw. Yet his coat weighs on vacant skin all the same.

A once-cherished waltz feels nightmarish now. He's felt this trip, the subway track and wistful wires, so many times before under the lavish spell of affection. This time he drifts through a wasteland under the influence of desolation.

And you don't grow tired of it?

I notice something new every time, how could I?

George rests his head against their claimed corner. The back of his hand is covered by chivalrous fingertips as three scales snake through the hearth of his mind. They undo themselves in one devastating descent.

Catatonic, his heart drums faster as the song continues to play. Dream leaves an impression on his pulse point, molds George's lips to fit perfectly with his, stains his fingerprints onto George's waist, conditions George's hand to fit around one forever larger.

He scarcely reaches five minutes before the headphones are withdrawn from his ears. George drops the silenced speakers onto his lap with withering lungs.

His thumb follows his torn bottom lip and feels the shuddered breaths expelled against it. Hard eyes and their suffocating pupils watch the shivering window across from him as each inch of the tunnel is quickly passed. George presses his mouth to his knee as he realizes he's alone on a train taking him downtown in the middle of the night.

He spends the final fragments of the ride mourning an estranged boy no longer beside him. At the next stop, George gets off the train and finds one to take him home.

He reaches his dorm again eventually, and by the time he does, Sapnap has returned, too. He asks where George was, to which George responds "the subway," peeling his coat away and heading to the bathroom to replace it with a gnawing black hoodie.

Chapter End Notes

LOLL thank you for reading, leave a kudos or comment letting me know what you think, they are greatly appreciated and very entertaining :)
Follow me on Twitter [here](#) if you want, I share snippets sometimes and other fun things :D

Eden

Chapter Summary

Even tired eyes, drained by the cruel gift of patience, glow at Eden.

Chapter Notes

Thought I'd do notes at the beginning of this chapter since it is technically the last one (there will be an epilogue I promise).

Thank you so much for the support on this story, I was super nervous when I started it but you guys have been so kind. I love hearing all of your thoughts, every single comment really made my day so thank you :] I will miss these characters but I have a lot more ideas so if you like my writing, follow my [Twitter](#) for updates!

This chapter is especially long, over 7k words, and it was super fun to write so I hope you enjoy <3
Mwah have fun xo

He finds room for his friends. When it becomes a bit easier, when he begins to think about Dream a bit less, Sapnap proposes they invite Karl and Quackity over. It'd be something frugal, not so taxing on his energy that stays rather low these days. Liquor, cigarettes, amused chatter. And the amity of his well-known dorm and its homely walls would be enough to warm his hollowed chest.

George finds that Sapnap was right. The fragrance of company helps steal a portion of his mind that was once so sick and worried. The alcohol helps, too, to clear his head. George swallows the nectar gladly, downs glass after glass of the pungent amber potion.

He doesn't contribute very often to the conversation, but devours each word that cushions the walls he's known as cold for so long with a gentle smile. And he's sure his friends notice where he clings to comfort elsewhere, within the cotton walls of a large sweatshirt. They don't say anything, though.

During the lulls in conversation, George's gaze wanders to the window. Buildings looming, puncturing the ebony ribbon of sky and defending the icy sidewalks. Traffic lights and soft bedroom lamps stretch far across the city, ensuring that it's never too lonely. The rush of cars stumbles through the open glass with sweet determination, and the melody soothes George's fragmenting skull. His hounding thoughts.

Somewhere in the dark, Dream lies alone. He submits to the vacant floor of his dorm, maybe the tangled sheets of his twin bed. Cobwebs catch the quiet air and make sure it remains, make sure that Dream *knows* he lies alone. His ears ring, hands empty, and he's left to the brutal and glimmering blade of his thoughts. Whereas George has this. George has his friends laughing with him, tossing down alcohol with him, slumping into the carpet with him. George feels guilty because he's *been* alone. He knows what it can do to open wounds.

But his friends steal his attention again. Again and again, George submits to his distraction.

Sapnap tries to make things normal again. Of course, he doesn't outright say it, but it's clear that the tear in their group made by crestfallen claws puts him in misery, too. Sapnap values his friends over anything.

"We're going to a party tonight," he says through the dim space of their dorm on another quiet night, "If you wanna come."

George's pen pauses as he glances over his shoulder from their desk, fingers tightening around the neck of the pen. Sapnap's eyes are tentative where they study him.

"Who's going?" George asks.

The boy's silent for a terse moment. He reads the verdict dejectedly, "Dream."

George swallows and turns away again in answer. He frowns at his page, considering how—if ever—he would see Dream again. How he would even hear the boy's name again without wilting in on himself.

"I'm sorry, Sapnap," George mumbles, "I know this is what you wanted to avoid. But it would be worse if I was there, trust me."

He stabs the ink tip into the paper again, gaze plain and his written words plain, too. His writing has felt dull and slow lately, but his deadline is impatient so there's no room for steps backward. He'll just have to remain unhappy with it.

"He misses you, you know."

His stomach hollows out at the lyric. George clenches his jaw as his pen stills once more and his panicked eyes glance briefly at his lonely hand.

"I don't want to talk about it," he murmurs.

"He asks about you."

George exhales at a sullen Dream, his name leaving the boy's velvet lips despite the way he was pushed away. No matter how many times George did it, Dream pushed back.

"I know he puts up a front for our sake, but I can tell this is killing him."

"What, are you on his side or something," George huffs, brows pinched and lips torn.

"No, I'm not on his *side*, George. You're my best friend, and he fucked up. But I don't think you even *want* to move on—"

"Of *course* I want to move on," George says breathlessly, eyes slipping over his shoulder once more and tumbling toward Sapnap's sorry regard.

"Yeah, that's why you wear his hoodie all the time," he murmurs, gentle despite the harsh bite of his words. George stares, ribs twining with hurt and chest saturated with shame. "I just think that maybe there's a reason you're still holding on. It's okay to forgive him, George."

George withdraws again, burying his shuddering lips behind soft knuckles. He attempts to replace his mind on the ink sprawled before him but the lines are blurred.

"It's killing both of you," Sapnap reiterates.

"I'm *fine*," George breathes, words caught by his palm. They ricochet, begging him to believe it.

"You're not."

Warmth depletes from the hug of black cotton he knows too well, warmth that could only be replaced by a forgotten embrace. And the purity of beaming rosy lips. He wants, he misses, everything about Dream until it kills him.

"Just think about it," Sapnap says.

I have, George begs.

I've lost myself thinking about it.

Where he would end up if he dwelled on it longer. In the dead of the night, on a train again. Or maybe this time with his knuckles pressed to someone's door, just to know him again.

Any longer and George would be suffocating under the influence of estranged lips.

Despite George's sure restraint, Sapnap leaves him with the address. He soon vanishes into the wicked greed of night that has stolen all of George's company. Once again, George is left to the stoic silence of a vacant dorm. He knows this morose atmosphere far too well by now, yet George still has no idea how to cope.

So he goes to bed early, falls asleep late because his conscience can't help but remind him over and over that Dream might be with someone else tonight. Gone and taken by alcohol, hands far away and finding another waist to hold close. George wishes his friends would stop stumbling toward all these stupid parties.

Eventually, he slips into a state of release, given a break from his wild thoughts only when his mind is thoroughly exhausted. His eyes slip shut, only to be woken later again.

It's far past midnight when George's phone lights up on his bedside table. The whispered alarm of an incoming call pries young sleep from his bones.

George blinks through the stale black air of his room, the side of his face just barely scraped and illuminated by the white light pouring from his upturned phone. He grabs the device bitterly, ready to decline an unknown number. His thumb is stopped by the bleaching letters he's met with instead.

Decline, George reminds himself. He stares at the screen, at the dangerous font. His thumb hovers.

Maybe it's an emergency, it has to be. Dream wouldn't call, especially at this hour, if it wasn't vital. Maybe something happened to Sapnap. What if it's an emergency.

The final two rings play out, the call about to fall flat. George surrenders to the sickly glowing button and presses the phone to his ear without another thought.

He rolls onto his back, exhaling toward the ceiling while his heart rate violently climbs.

"Hello?" he murmurs, throat rough from drowsiness and faint from the presence of a stranger.

“George?”

His eyes fall shut, the note thundering through his skull. His rich velvet baritone is distorted by the telephone line, a reminder of their distance, but it crushes George all the same.

He bites his lip till blood is drawn, scorching patterns into the blank ceiling. “Hey, is everything okay?”

Delicate curls of saddened laughter reach his ear somberly. George’s ribs turn soft instantly.

“Holy shit,” Dream mumbles. His words are slurred.

“Are you drunk?” George asks, frowning blue.

Dream laughs again, this one oddly unsettling. “Yeah, I mean. It’s a party, after all.” George notes the sharp quiet when he stops talking.

“Where are you?” he murmurs, concern weakening his voice.

Dream sighs, “My car.” There’s a hushed shuffle.

Alone, George wonders. Dream sits within the walls of his car, phone clutched by slender fingers, moonlight softening the cushion of his lips and turning every lazy word to syrup. *Alone*.

“You’re not gonna drive home like that, are you?”

“No, Sapnap said he’d stay sober for me.”

George says nothing. The ceiling weighs on his bones.

“How are you, George?” Dream asks. Youthful wonder clings to the question though it feels bittersweet.

“I’m...”

Days of heartache and neverending desolation. Grasping onto any memory he can. The hoodie, the song, the train. Metal weights sit at the bottom of his heart.

“I’m alright,” he whispers, “How are you?”

Are you as messed up as I am?

Dream pauses and the silence scores George’s heart.

“I really miss you,” he answers quietly.

George’s lips part, fingers softening around his phone. The fragile melody hurts more than missing Dream himself.

“You’re never around anymore,” Dream mourns, “I—I feel so awful whenever we meet up and you’re not there again.”

George exhales and melts further into the sheets. He nudges his knuckle against the edge of his eye as he listens to Dream’s confessions.

“I know it’s not your fault, but...god, sometimes I wish it was, you know? I just—I can’t keep

feeling like this.”

Devastation pours through blue veins. He brushes his fingertips against bruised lips, the dark to disguise his glossy eyes.

“When can I see you again,” Dream whispers.

“I don’t know,” George answers fragilely.

Quiet envelops them. George can still vaguely hear Dream’s steady breaths and picture his fluttering lips.

“I wish you were here,” he mumbles. After a moment of consideration, he adds, “That’s a bad idea, though.”

“Why?” George asks, possibly too eager.

Dream hovers in the grey space between them.

“Because I’d just kiss you. And you don’t want that.”

George scrapes at the empty chambers of his lungs, weightless.

Of course I want that.

A somber laugh bleeds through the speaker, followed by a sniffle, “Oh, god. I need to stop doing this.”

“Doing what?” George murmurs mindlessly.

There’s another shuffle and George waits for his favorite voice to return, as lost and drowsy as it is.

“Getting drunk when I’m sad,” Dream mutters, “It just makes everything worse.”

George’s frown deepens, etched into his pale features so thoroughly.

“I don’t even know why I called you,” he laughs lightly again, “I mean, I can’t believe you answered.”

“Me neither,” George mumbles, too quiet for the microphone to pick up.

“I’m just glad to hear your voice,” Dream says, each syllable blending into each other, “I’ve really missed you.”

George swallows, wrapping an arm around his stomach as he rolls onto his side to curl in on himself. He nods to himself in muted agreement, glancing at his window through the break in the curtains. Sapphire stares back at him, spilling over the lavender crescents beneath his eyes and the paling crown of his lips.

“I stopped listening to our song,” Dream adds conversationally.

At that, George holds his breath, eyes hard. Another subdued, eerie laugh crawls through the speaker.

“I’ve listened to that song for *years*,” he says, low and muddled, warped into something chilling, “Crazy how one person can ruin something for you.”

George's lips part, guilt and horror slithering down his spine. His chest blackens while cold fragility rolls down his cheek and marks the milk skin.

"Oh," he whispers shakily.

Dream sighs. Everything about his bearing feels tired.

"I should probably go back inside," he murmurs, "Find Sapnap or something."

Don't go, George pleads.

I'm not ready to let go.

"I'll see you soon, yeah?" he says hopefully, "I really miss you. Maybe I'll see you soon." His voice softens, quieter and weaker, nearly gone, "Bye, George. I love you."

His chest shudders, another tear spilling onto the plane of his cheek.

Don't go.

Spinning with memories and coffins, their greyscale city, flower petal lips to listening ears, tangled fingers and colliding freckles. A scarce strawberry moon kind of affection.

"I love you too," George whispers, throat tight. The dull drone of the call ending hammers through his skull. He's alone again.

The phone falls away from his face as he presses his fingers to his throat, then his lips, frame shivering. The arm wrapped around himself is no comparison to the comfort of Dream's, and instead only reminds him that he's alone.

Stuck in the dark of his room, George is alone again.

And if his confession was heard, then how could he ever stay alone.

George sits up, reaching for his phone again and an abandoned text from Sapnap. Then he's heading for the door.

Where the throat of the road closes, a house overflows with wasted and weightless bodies, walls nearly bursting at the seams. Sleeping cars line the edge of the sidewalk, street lamps to warm their shivering and abandoned frames. By the time George leaves the cab, his lungs are drowning. He remains on the uneven pavement for a faithful moment.

Dream is there, somewhere within the boundless crowds. Who he hasn't seen for weeks, who he fell in love with, who broke his heart. And somehow, he's supposed to see him again.

George takes a step forward, fingers drumming against his side.

Somehow, he gets to see him again.

He traces every inch of the house three times over. Past blended bodies and sticky fingerprints and liquor-stained breaths he wanders. His eyes leap to every rugged pile of blond hair or towering figure. None match what he's looking for.

The air is murky, low lights making the task almost impossible as he squints at every passing face.

And he's nearly pulled to the side many times. Greedy hands tug at his softened limbs and red whispers scathe his ear. It's all disorienting, especially beside the scarcity of clean air to fill his lungs.

On his third time around, George collides with the solid build of someone within the crowd. And mind set on someone else, he continues pushing through the wave with a curt apology. Though before he can retreat his wrist is caught.

George stops amidst the swaying mass, violet lights boring into his cheeks. His rigid eyes are softened once he recognizes the face keeping him back, nerves suddenly trickling in louder.

"Oh," he glances away from Sapnap's scrutiny briefly, "Um—hey, Sapnap."

A subtle smile tilts the boy's lips, "George, what're you doing here?"

George swallows, eyes scattering to the floor. He takes a breath of composure before looking up again.

"Dream called me," he says, "Have you seen him?"

A clue of surprise catches the angles of Sapnap's face, widening his eyes and parting his lips. "I haven't," he answers, "I just know he went out to the car."

George nods, looking past Sapnap to scan the crowd again, "He said he was going inside, but I haven't seen him."

Sapnap catches his elbow, regaining George's attention. His gaze is careful, gentle on George's delicate composure, "What—what'd he say?"

George hovers, having memorized every lyric of their call though not sure he could ever repeat it. Having played it over and over again on the ride here.

"I'll tell you," he promises, "Later, okay?"

Sapnap's cautious eyes linger for a moment longer until he nods, fading into something kinder. Without another word he buries his hand in his pocket, soon revealing a set of keys.

"Um, here," he shoves them toward George, who takes them with uncertainty, "I'll get a cab back, just...take him home, yeah?" at George's panicked eyes he offers a reassuring smile, palm colliding with his shoulder, "Kid is fucked up."

George breathes an airy, nervous laugh, fingertips numbing where they hold the keys. "Thanks," he mumbles.

Sapnap presses his hand to George's chest and shoves him backward, toward where the door and empty night lie. "Get the fuck out of here, I doubt he ever came back in."

Smile still capturing his lips, Sapnap turns away and dissolves back into the crowd. George turns, too.

He soon steps out onto the porch, chest and palm heavy. The road is slick with starlight and the ferocity of the winter air clouds each car window. He follows the belt of parked vehicles up the sidewalk with wired eyes. The front yard is completely empty, air so still that his pounding heart fills the quiet. Though far up the road a lonely silhouette stands with him.

He clutches tighter around the keys, brass teeth digging into his skin. George steps off the porch into full vulnerability.

As he draws closer, the face of his silent company is stitched together as the boy he's held only in his mind for so long. A wrecked and translucent version of his memories.

Dream stares at the glowing house, soles dwelling on the sticky silver sidewalk. His profile catches pitiful moonlight, engraving his sunken cheekbones, soft lips, and the slope of his nose. His irises mirror imperious springs of adolescence. With each step nearer, George's legs grow number.

Only a few feet separating them, George finds that his throat has run dry, lungs the same. The words are choked when he calls, "What are you doing out here?"

Dream's eyes leap to him and pour more nerves into his bloodstream than he anticipated. As soon as he recognizes George, shrunken by every feeling he's left strangled for *weeks*, his regard contorts into something fearful.

Suspended by shock and brows violently shadowing his eyes, Dream says nothing as George comes to a stop in front of him. And *god* is he even more gorgeous up close.

"How drunk am I," Dream mutters under his breath.

A hopeless smile touches George's lips, one that he attempts to push away. Dream watches the sensation with a laden chest.

"I thought you were going back in," George says.

Dream's frown deepens as he traces over George's features again and again.

"Um, I was—I was going to..." he reaches out, hand shivering as it captures George's jaw, "What—what are you doing here?"

George's lungs seize once again at the touch, throat failing. Then again when Dream presses their foreheads together. Up close, George notes the scarlet cracks in the porcelain whites of his eyes.

"God, you..." his rose lips expel a dizzying breath against George's face, words tumbling out of them numbly, "You're so much prettier than I remember."

His heart falls as Dream's eyes bore into his, licked with candied fire. When they slip down he shakes his head softly, fragile fingers abandoning George's face. A moment later he pulls away.

"You shouldn't be here," Dream declares breathlessly, gaze pleading. His eyes sink even lower to George's torso.

George's lips part, about to offer anything because he feels like he hasn't spoken in *ages*. But Dream's fingers curl around his palm faintly and lift the hand from George's side. George finds his tar pupils gnawing at the dark hoodie George forgot to replace.

Dream inhales thickly, eyes baneful as they meet George's again.

"You're making this impossible," he murmurs on an exhale.

"I..." George swallows, heart rate inclining and eyes wide, "I don't have any oversized ones."

Dream smiles feebly, so sweet and subdued that George's mind stumbles to savor it. The boy nods, stepping forward as his arms wind around George. He buries his face in George's shoulder and

slowly, George holds him back.

“I’ve fucking *missed you*.”

George inhales the raw melody of his voice, sinks into his hold.

“I missed you too,” he whispers.

As Dream withdraws, attempts a step backward, he trips over his own feet and the awaiting pavement. George reaches out to help steady him, Dream glaring at the sidewalk. When he looks up, he laughs. The sound springs a laugh in George’s throat, too.

“Here, maybe just lean against the car,” he murmurs warmly, “I’ll go get you some water.”

Dream does, presses his backside to the frame of his car and nods. George sends him a reassuring smile.

“I’ll be right back.”

He reluctantly tears himself from the scene, retracing his path toward the house. He attempts his steps as quickly as he can, not too fond of the idea of leaving Dream alone again.

His small figure sinks into the packed walls once more, chasing any room that’d promise him what he’s looking for. He pushes through a dense sea of bodies toward the near-vacant kitchen, scanning the space hurriedly. He only finds an abandoned water bottle on the counter and decides it’ll have to sustain.

When he approaches the empty atmosphere of wilting street lamps and soft stars again, Dream remains exactly as George left him.

“Was all I could find,” he says, offering the bottle toward the boy. Dream takes it with sweet sincerity swallowing his eyes.

“Thank you.”

George nods, glancing away up the road. Dream tips the mouth of the bottle to his lips only once before he leaves it half-empty on the roof of his car. George sends him a half-scolding look.

“You’re gonna have an awful hangover tomorrow,” he says lightly, reaching up to fix a bit of Dream’s jagged hair into place. Dream’s eyes sear the skin of his face.

“I’m not *that* drunk,” he mumbles.

George smiles softly, “You tripped over the flat sidewalk a moment ago.”

As he pulls away, Dream catches his wrist with kind fingers. He lifts George’s hand again and molds it to the shape of Dream’s jaw, his melted irises wistful. George holds his breath.

“Can I kiss you,” Dream whispers sadly. His fingertips ghost over George’s knuckles in a quiet array of adoring fingerprints.

George’s lips part amidst a soft frown, chest crashing with shallow tiffany waves. He grazes Dream’s features delicately.

“Dream,” he murmurs.

Dream holds his sorry eyes for a moment longer, cheeks sheer.

“I know,” he places George’s fingertips to his lips, whispers into them, “I’m sorry.” Then he drops George’s hand completely.

Their space is plagued with dangerous strawberry greed, the time spent apart taxing to their thin self-restraint. George would have to blame it on that. That, and the shattered glass gaze Dream wears.

He reaches up again, pulls Dream’s close, the boy’s eyes dimming as he does. George places his lips with clemency to Dream’s, mind filling with it. With the forgotten feeling, with the way Dream’s eyes fall shut in surrender, with the lonesome, simplistic kiss. And as he withdraws Dream pursues more.

His hand finds George’s waist, loving to his fragile figure, and he captures the shape of George’s lips again. It’s so warm and desperate and faintly familiar that George slumps blindly into the rhythm. Dream’s arm wraps around the small of his back as his lips dig into George’s supple mouth again.

When he presses his tongue into George’s waiting mouth, the flavor of alcohol overrides the pliant give of his limbs. He severs their binding touch, though Dream’s drunken lips find their way to his neck instead. George grasps at his hair, eyes closing despite his racing mind.

“Shit, sorry,” he mutters, shaking his head, “I shouldn’t have done that.”

Dream says nothing, never withdraws, merely sucking another kiss onto George’s pulse. George inhales sharply, pulling at the boy’s hair again at the scrape of teeth.

“Dream, you’re drunk.”

“So?” Dream murmurs. His fangs drift toward George’s jaw ambitiously.

“I don’t want to take advantage of you,” George breathes.

“You can take advantage of me,” he realigns their lips, noses slotting together as his eyes delve with ferocity into George’s. He tugs at the fabric by George’s waist, voice heated, “Take advantage of me, George.”

George witnesses the devotion soaking Dream’s gaze as he attempts to regain his sense, reminding himself over and over of the alcohol coursing through Dream’s veins. And the boy is so near, holding George like he’s worth gold and looking at him like he’s carved from it.

George shakes his head again, tucking another strand of Dream’s hair away, “I’m gonna drive you home, okay? You need to get to bed.”

Dream’s viciously desperate gaze eases into something more loving. He allows more space between them so their desires aren’t as suffocating anymore, drawing a line through George’s freckles with the tip of his nose and watching the spot as he does.

“You’re gonna take me home?” he murmurs.

George smiles solemnly, drawing a line of his own across Dream’s cheekbone. “Yeah, love.”

Dream meets his gentle eyes again curiously. “Okay,” he mumbles, grip weakening, “George?”

“Hm?”

He traces George’s features again, memorizing every cut and curve.

“I’m sorry,” he pleads, “For hurting you. I didn’t mean to, George. Please don’t be mad at me anymore.”

George feels the stars weigh on his chest, plastered to his ribcage. His throat lines with lethal confessions so George merely nods, hoping it’s enough. “Get in the car, okay?”

Dream holds on for a moment longer before his touch slips away, leaving George colder than he expected. He turns toward the car, tugging the passenger door open. George steals the water bottle from the hood and leaves it with him.

He soon settles behind the steering wheel, jamming the key into the ignition. He eyes the dashboard nervously as it lights up.

“You know how to drive?” Dream murmurs skeptically.

“Um, I’m a bit out of practice, but I have a license,” George answers. His hand finds the gear stick as he adds under his breath, “It might be expired, though.”

He shifts into drive, glancing into the black of the rearview mirror. He steers them out onto the open road.

“Maybe turn your headlights on,” Dream assists. George glances briefly to the side, lip pulled between his teeth as he flicks the lights on. A warm laugh sounds from beside him.

As they start past the happy houses Dream presses his nose to the window, watching the world wisk by under the night’s influence. The blue hues from its sky pour over the angles of his face in rounded brushstrokes. He holds his knuckles to his lips, eyes serene.

“Um, I don’t really know where I’m going,” George admits lowly, “Could you pull up directions?”

“Yeah,” Dream retrieves his phone from his pocket and presses a few commands into it. After a moment, he clears his throat, “What’s my address?”

George sends him a feeble glare and quiet smile, pulling over onto the side of the road again. “I’ll do it.”

He finds his own phone and soon reveals a glowing map and list of directions. He discards the device in the cup holder, turning the car around completely.

“What’re you doing?” Dream mumbles.

“We’re going the wrong way.”

He glances at the boy sinking into the seat beside him. Dream exhales a sweet laugh, one that creases his eyes. George smiles as he looks away again.

The ribbon of road tumbles after them as they quickly leave it behind. George occasionally spares glances to his phone to keep them on track, hands tight on the wheel. His limbs fall back into habit the more distance they travel.

“You know what,” Dream says amidst a steady chorus of silence, looking over his shoulder at the

dark-swallowed backseat.

“What?” George amuses.

“We’ve had sex in this car.”

He frowns, sending Dream a disapproving glare as dismisses the memory. “Okay, maybe this should be more of a quiet drive,” he mumbles.

Dream laughs softly, “Aw, don’t be shy, George.”

“I’m not shy, just...”

“What?”

George shrugs, eyeing the looming street lights bitterly. “I don’t know,” he mutters.

He feels sticky moonlit eyes clinging to his profile, every flutter of his lashes or breath of his lips. Dream doesn’t look away.

“What,” George asks, sparing Dream another fleeting look. The weight of his pupils turns George’s lungs violet.

“Nothing,” Dream murmurs, “You’re just pretty, George.”

George swallows, grip tightening until white skin is pulled taut over his knuckles. He says nothing as heat rises on his cheeks. A brazen smile splits Dream’s face.

“You get flustered so easily,” he muses.

George exhales, glaring at the endless road he chases. With nobody else around, it could be easy to fall back into their old blush tosses of conversation. But George is still fatally aware of Dream’s intoxication, of their not thoroughly mended past.

“I just think we should be careful,” he mutters.

Dream pauses at the change in tone, the silence gnawing at George’s heart as he anticipates Dream’s curious voice.

“What do you mean?” he asks.

George shrugs vaguely, shoulders wired. “We should wait until we talk about things. Once you’re sober.”

Dream falls quiet again, the vacant pulse paining George further. He drags his thumb anxiously against the leather.

“You kissed me,” Dream reminds, voice half-there. The fragility tears George’s stitches open, breath lost to the icy car. “You can’t just kiss me and then leave again.”

George’s eyes snap toward the boy, spine running cold at Dream’s damaged look and swollen accusation. He says nothing, mind so caught up in *I left, I left, I left*.

That’s how Dream sees it. George left him, left him weighed down by all that he feels for George, left him wandering alone. And he thinks George could ever leave again, thinks that George wants to see if they’ll survive or fail.

He never spoils the confession to Dream, his caution still vital and the boy still intoxicated. And so the rest of their drive is silent, a dim landline of every unspoken word wound tight between them. George watches the empty streets and their somber lights while Dream watches the quilt sky, lips set flat.

They end up beneath the staggering building where Dream finds home. He helps the boy out of the car and up to his dorm, the trip just as grave and quiet. The open door reveals billowing curtains, an unmade bed, and pallid walls. Dream stumbles in without a word, tearing his jacket away and the thin shirt beneath it, too. Then he shuts the window, nearly knocking everything on his bedside table over in the process. It's all a sad, lonely painting. George remains in the doorway.

Dream settles on the edge of his mattress, irises drained as he stares at the carpet. George finally steps into the heather glow of the room, closing the door softly behind him. He approaches the boy carefully.

Porcelain fingers frame Dream's jaw again, tilting his face toward George. Grim shadows lie beneath George's touch, reaching the boy's desolate eyes.

"I didn't mean it like that," George murmurs, their silence too harrowing and tomorrow too far, "I just want us to wait, not that I'd leave."

Dream's face is unreadable as he considers the words, unnerving George further. Features blank, blank, blank.

"My whole relationship with you is a waiting game," he mumbles plainly.

George's skin ignites at the tired tune. His lips fall, chest aching with it.

"I know," he whispers, "But just a little longer, please. I want this to work."

Dream's gaze descends wordlessly. His hands settle on George's waist, though he readjusts them haphazardly to fit around his hips instead. He watches his own fingers curl into the ebony fabric.

"Will you stay?" he asks quietly, exhaust wearing at his skin. George's thumb traces the tired patch beneath his eye and Dream meets his gaze again.

"Yeah."

The grace of his touch recedes and Dream soon pries his hands away, too. He turns to the slender mattress, finds a spot where George can fit beside him. Their ardor-stripped bones finally bask in the comfort of soft blankets and rectifying company.

George falls asleep wrapped up in the addicting warmth of lucid arms.

-

He wakes before Dream and revels in the divine serenity of the boy's proximity. Nose pressed to his throat, matching every one of his easy breaths. His nails etch waves up and down Dream's bicep and back. The heat of his skin keeps George sane, so simple and real.

It keeps him grounded as his mind spins, retracing every step he took last night, every touch he

dared to complete, and every soft-spoken word they shared. Even through the crackled tone of a telephone line.

And the prospect of facing Dream while he's sober is so much more terrifying. When he's able to think clearly, recall the details of their relationship and how they left it. Not so giddy and lovesick, instead in need of an answer or a promise. His nerves light as soon as the boy stirs.

The chin nestled in his hair shifts and George latches onto the sound of skin dragging against smooth fabric. His fingertips fade, replaced by a subtler thumb against Dream's arm. Silently, he hopes the boy's not really awake yet, just for a little more time.

"George?"

His voice is gravelly from thick sleep, warm to George's fuzzy mind. He lifts his face from Dream's neck, finding his eyes timidly. He attempts to keep his own voice calm.

"Hey," Dream marvels at him, making the task infinitely more difficult, "How are you?"

They've spent so many mornings just like this, same exact bed and same exact souls. Yet this one sits heavy on them. Even surrounded by the sweetness of buttercream sheets and privacy.

"Good," Dream murmurs, though he barely seems to consider the question, pupils sticky.

"How's your hangover?" George muses, offering a muted smile. Dream smiles slightly in return, laying a palm against his forehead.

"Um, it's—it's definitely there."

George's lips raise higher as he softly nods. Dream follows the path of his hairline, the slope of his nose, the cut of his cheekbones, and the seam of his lips. He frowns abruptly.

George's nerves wash in louder as Dream rolls onto his back, troubledly scratching the ceiling.

"What's wrong?" he asks lowly.

"Just..." Dream drags his hand down his face, eyes narrowed and critical, "Just remembering what we talked about last night."

George tucks his bottom lip between his teeth, chin hooking over Dream's shoulder and face pressed to the arch of his neck once again.

"Did you call me?"

His fingertips dance along Dream's collarbone and he swallows thickly as he answers, "You called me."

Dream falls quiet, save for the even breaths that provoke the rise and fall of his chest. George's stomach turns with each passing beat. At a particular inhale, he melts a kiss into Dream's softened skin.

Dream finds his eyes again, his stare laced with flaring accusation. The memory of George's own shadowed bed and pale ceiling scrapes his sternum, eyes guilty on the boy he loves.

His phone alights with alarm on the bedside table, wrenching his heart graciously from confrontation. He sits up and swings his legs over the edge of the bed, grabbing the whirring device from the surface. The newly-gained space provides relief to his aching lungs.

“Yeah?” he inquires into the phone, scouring the carpet floor.

“Hey, where the fuck have you been? I’ve been texting you.”

George rubs at his face, throat tense. He sighs, “Yeah, sorry, I was asleep.”

“Well you’ve slept half the day away.”

George glances at the clock resting on the mahogany table. He scowls, tongue running over the back of his teeth. At his stoic tension, a few wanderlust fingers slip under his sweater, roaming from the dip of his waist to his hip. George chews at his lip and relaxes into the touch.

“What happened last night?” Sarnap prods, “You’ve left me on the edge of my seat. I nearly thought you died.”

“Nothing,” George murmurs, “I stayed over at Dream’s. I forgot to text you, sorry, I—was distracted.”

“Ohh,” Sarnap taunts.

“No.”

A bouncing laugh curls through the speaker, “I’m kidding, I’m kidding, I know you’re not that dumb.”

George glares at the window and the obscured silver sky. The melody of sheets shifting behind him sparks his memory and fragmented panic, and George inhales sharply.

“Listen, can we talk later? I’ll be home soon.”

A leg sidles up beside his, pressed close.

“Yeah, okay, I get it,” Sarnap muses, “See you later.”

Dream’s chest provides blazing warmth and looming pressure to his back.

“Bye, Sarnap.”

He leaves the phone on the table again, an arm wrapping around his front as he does. George exhales as he leans back into the contact, inebriated. It casts honeyed heat upon them.

With a calloused thumb, Dream meanders the line of his jaw. When it flits to George’s bottom lip his eyelashes flutter over a stuttered breath. He follows the skin like admiring an array of acrylics.

“Is this okay?” he mumbles. It settles as a chorus of wings in George’s stomach.

“Yeah,” he whispers.

The arm falls to wrap George’s waist too, Dream’s nose nudging the top of his spine. It draws a trail of sizzling gasoline down the back of his neck.

“Are you okay?” he asks again. George’s eyes slip shut.

“Yeah.”

A kiss is placed against his skin, warm and doting. “What’d Sarnap say?”

Dream hooks his chin over George's shoulder, peering at him softly. George returns the look faint-heartedly.

"Just...you know how worried he gets sometimes," he says.

Dream says nothing, skin radiating sultry devotion. George sighs into his hold, bones easing with each swaying second. Afternoon light washes them in the familiar fragrance of their addicting intimacy.

"George," Dream murmurs.

He's stripped breathless at the gentle rumble, "Hm?"

Their conversation lulls at Dream's careful rumination. He releases a shallow breath, fingertip trailing up George's side briefly.

"Did you mean it," he asks lowly.

George frowns at the boy's doubt, at the fragile question, veins writhing. Then his mind slips to their late call, to Dream ebbing away and George's fallen confession. Dream *hearing* that and sitting with it alone.

"Yeah, of—of course I did," he whispers.

Dream buries his calloused lips in George's shoulder. His pupils swell with tangled sentiments, arms tightening around George. He lifts his face again.

"Listen, I—I'm so sorry, George," he murmurs, "I just—I felt so much for you that, that I got *lost*, but—god, I mean, you deserve so much more than what I did, and..." he sighs, raw honesty gracing his eyes, "I want to give that to you, I do."

George listens silently, features sedated but his thoughts claiming an unsteady pulse.

"You're safe with me, I swear," Dream promises lowly, "Just...please let me."

He swallows, scanning Dream's graceful features with fascination. *Safe*.

He presses their foreheads together, lashes lazy as they dip.

"You," he mutters, sucking a kiss to Dream's lips and the boy faintly gasping against his, "Have been so fucking *dumb*," another glosses Dream's mouth, George glaring into his eyes when they part, "And I spent so long missing you so much that I couldn't *breathe*, but even with the way you hurt me, no one is kinder to me than you."

His admissions fall bitterly, chest igniting with them. The flame that broke them and the one that kept Dream a permanent resident in his mind both kindled in the depths of his ribcage.

"I hate you, Dream, because that is what I knew for years, yet somehow in *months* I fell so stupidly in love with you and I have no fucking clue how you did it. I hate you because I can't shake the thought of you, even when I wanted to move on. And I *needed* to move on, I drove myself crazy trying to. Because you left such an impression on me that I didn't know how to exist without you."

Dream stares, pupils bursting and lips parted. George sighs, eyes biting into the boy's mouth again.

"So even if I wanted to say no to you, I couldn't. And I hate you for it."

Their breaths tangle in the narrow space and it sends toxins to George's already numbed skull.

"But look at the way you treat me," he whispers, palm and pearl fingertips sliding over the arm wrapped around him. The soft kiss of skin casts goosebumps upon their fading wounds, "I don't think anybody deserves me more than you."

They find quiet again, this one laced with simplicity and divine devotion. Dream nudges George's cheek with the tip of his nose, eyes lit.

"You love me," he boasts quietly.

George's lips tilt subtly upward. "You are," he exhales, "The worst."

Dream smiles, too. "I was drunk, you fucking asshole. Drunk and sad, what the hell's wrong with you, George?"

"I'm sorry, you're a cute drunk," George mumbles.

Dream's soft smile breaks into a grin, the sight breathtaking, "That's so mean, I was *heartbroken*."

George's fingers brush dazedly through his hair, "We need to get drunk and make out or something, *that'd* be cute."

Dream hums, pushing forward to steal another kiss and mumbling, "Done that," against George's lips as he does. Then his mouth finds the side of George's neck.

"But just us," George murmurs, head growing more weightless with each plush sink of lips into his skin, "Together."

"Isn't that adorable," Dream purrs, "Do you want to get breakfast, or—lunch, I guess—god this fucking hoodie, I *swear*, George."

He fists the thick cotton hugging George's torso. George surrenders to his falling eyelids, mumbling half-mindedly, "I can take it off."

A pure and airy laugh is drawn from Dream's tongue, buried blissfully in George's neck. Everything about the melody is gorgeous.

George winds his arms around Dream's neck and pulls him in again, "Breakfast later."

Crushing lips build his oasis in iridescent pinks and reds. Dream parts the two of them after only a moment.

"Listen, I would really take this offer any other time," he says breathlessly, "But my head is *pounding*."

George laughs, enchanted, Dream mirroring the tune and clutching tighter at George.

"I'm in desperate need of a pill and some...eggs, or something."

George nods, biting his spellbound smile. Dream slowly untangles his arms from George and leans away. His eyes linger on George a moment longer before he stands from the bed.

George lands again in their puddle of sheets, watching Dream disappear into the bathroom. He holds his knuckles to his lips where they still teem with giddy afterglow. The prospect of a sunny breakfast with Dream only widens them further. Soles passing quiet nudges beneath the table,

savory food exchanged in butterscotch lighting, the warming hug of a shared booth. Stumbling back to Dream's room, sugary kisses blooming against fair skin.

He reaches for his phone again, glazing over the list of unread messages from Sapnap. Their conversation is drawn to the screen, George's thumbs dancing.

Never mind, might be a while.

The response is almost instant.

Atta boy.

Epilogue

Chapter Summary

“We need to get drunk and make out or something, *that’d* be cute.”

Spring washes in dancing sunrays and occasional showers. The leaves and the grass turn to viridescence again, even giving home to imperious flowers. The city glows in its reign; shimmering cement sidewalks, fluttering greenery, and crisp air. And the new semester wipes their records refreshingly clean.

Another new is George’s new relationship. He finds their fresh start electrifying, his skin tattooed full of honeymoon touches. His pupils are always swollen and his fingertips are always licked with craving, for Dream is addictive.

He also finds out how much he underestimated the relief of a public relationship. He doesn’t have to restrain his heart’s greed around their friends anymore, can melt into Dream’s side during late nights while listening to the group’s aimless chatter. And when they drift into sweltering parties, Dream is his. They tip back alcohol together, dance together, wander home together. Every small date of theirs is stowed away in a heart-shaped box and every whispered kiss of skin is stashed in a locket. George grows quite the collection.

He’s particularly excited for today’s venture. As he meanders through the quiet hallway, daisy light pouring over his skin, his mind buzzes. His fingers coddle the necks of two bottles.

When he stops before Dream’s door, he stuffs one under his arm to free a hand that reaches into his pocket. A bronze key cuts his fair skin, one that George soon sticks into its corresponding slot. He twists it to the side and earns a faint click.

“Hey,” he chirps as he enters, vibrant smile dashed across his lips, “I didn’t know if you liked wine or liquor more, so I brought both.”

Dream glances up from where he sorts through his dresser, torso bare. His sage eyes beam charmingly, a perfect influence on George’s lungs. George shoves the door shut behind him with the sole of his shoe and starts toward a cluttered mahogany surface to free his hands.

“Both are fine,” Dream answers, “Though I only have wine glasses.”

An ivy and amber bottle settle on the boy’s bedside table. George laughs softly to himself at the image of two lonely and alluring glasses, maybe lipstick stains or the remnants of laughter. He begins shoving items toward the edges of the table in an attempt to clear the space.

“I don’t even want to know how many people have used those,” he muses.

Dream laughs gruffly, and George finds him throwing a lax knit sweater on when he glances over his shoulder.

“Just know I was thinking of you every time,” he salvages, meeting George’s eyes with a glint to his own. George scoffs, slipping his jacket and shoes off.

"I'm so sure," he murmurs, turning toward the table again to return to his task.

Dream is soon near, arms finding their way around George's waist. He litters a kiss on George's shoulder, "Look, you've been here barely a minute and you're already making fun of me."

"It's my job as the boyfriend to remind you of your heartbreaker days," George defends.

Dream reaches out, fingers lacing through George's knuckles where his fingers work. "Stop messing with my stuff," he grumbles, prying the hand away to steal it for himself.

"You're a slob," George says, turning in the boy's grasp. Dream beams winningly at him, dimples carved into his cheeks. George tears away from the display with a blushing heart. "Alright, where are these fabulous glasses?" he taunts.

Dream lands on the mattress behind him while George pursues a lonesome set of cabinets. He returns with a pair of wine glasses and a corkscrew that he had unearthed, too.

"Okay," he sings, returning to the spot and Dream watching with smoked irises. He dumps the glasses beside the bottles and reaches for the slender one, extending it and the corkscrew toward Dream, "Do you want to open this for me?"

Dream takes them with a subdued smile, placing the glass body on the table again and soon popping it open. George steals it back with a murmur of gratitude. He tips the rim to awaiting vases and watches scarlet nectar pool in the crystalware. He hands one to Dream, pressing the other to his lips and spilling blood on his tongue.

"Do you want to play a card game?" he proposes, abandoning the glass as he starts toward the cabinets again. He begins tugging drawers open heedlessly, muttering, "I should've brought Sapnap's deck."

"I know what we can do," Dream calls from the bed.

George glances over his shoulder, "What?"

George's eyes are curious, Dream's clever, and he never breaks eye contact as he suggests, "Bruise your thighs."

George glares, dismisses Dream with a, "No," and carries on digging through the drawers again. Dream laughs warmly.

"I don't have any cards, George, sorry."

George frowns dejectedly, "Maybe I can go to the corner store—"

"Come here, please," Dream hums.

George shoves the drawer closed with faint disappointment, retracing his steps back to Dream. The boy meets him with a lush smile, eyes thankful. He catches George's hips and tilts his chin up, leaning forward. George's fingers lay over his lips before he can get too close.

"Hey," Dream mumbles through a pout.

"Here's the rule, you can't kiss me until you can't see straight."

His frown deepens, furrowed brows and downturned lips, "Why not?"

Slender porcelain fingers shift to clutch Dream's chin instead, tilting his jaw further. George slots their noses together, torturous and tortured lips nearly brushing.

"Because wouldn't it feel so much better when you finally do?" he prompts.

Soft skull, George thinks, glittered veins.

He smiles subtly at Dream's dripping exhale, the boy's glare hidden by black, unkempt greed. George's pupils drag along his maple blemishes.

"That's the fun," he murmurs, the words all trickling from his teeth onto his tongue. He lolls his head to the other side, "And then you'll kiss me for *hours*."

As George pulls away, Dream's marred eyes prowl down his front, from his wicked lashes to his thighs. He meets George's gaze again grimly, reaching for his cherried glass.

"I can't believe this is the result of my miserable pining," he mutters, lifting the poison to his mouth.

They collapse into the elated lavender atmosphere of Dream's dorm, each dared sip of alcohol sending them further toward a weightless sanctuary. The murky and flickering bulb of Dream's lamp is all there is to light the room, and so golden shadows contour the walls and their giggling inhabitants. George ends up slumped into Dream's lap, head by the boy's ribs and every blitzed laugh shaking his frame. They indulge in the satiating comfort of a worn mattress.

George's bones grow soft, mind steadily melting into molasses. Their first few rounds fill his lungs with fruitful laughter, giggles that he emits into the vanilla air and let ascend. Their ceiling is quickly full of them, Dream's laughter undying, too. Stuck like bubblegum to the plaster.

"This is better, definitely," George murmurs, cloudy, "Than the first time."

Dream hums in subtle discontent, watching George with love-drunk and charred irises. "It's different, though. The first time you were *begging* me to touch you."

George smiles skeptically, glaring, "Oh, was I?"

"Mhm. And now I'm not even allowed to."

George admires him, glowing yellow light dancing against the angles of his face. At the decline of his jaw where he looks down at George, tumbled hair falls into his eyes and kisses his languid lashes.

"You can touch me," George counters, "Just not with your mouth."

The corner of Dream's lips rises vaguely, red and glossy from wine, though his eyes remain lax.

"No?" he challenges tantalizingly. His thumb strays from the pliant bed, slowly scraping the cut of bone above George's throat, "I can't even kiss your jaw? Or your collarbones," his fingers stray fleetingly to the sharp angle peeking out of George's collar. His hand roams lower, down George's inner-thigh.

Not even your thighs, George fills in.

"No," he murmurs.

Dream leans down to press their foreheads together, grinning against George's mouth as dainty

tufts of laughter fall from his tongue onto George's.

"I'll fill our glasses," George says once Dream's pulled away again, sitting up from his lap. He plucks the looming glass from the table and faces the blonde again. The mouth of the bottle is angled toward the wine glass perched in George's other hand. He waits for the slosh of liquid, though it never comes.

"I think it's empty, George," Dream says.

George glances up at him, then eyes the empty cup again. "Oh."

He sets the bottle along with his glass on the table again, socks landing on the carpet floor.

"Well, lucky for us, I brought liquor," he announces, reaching for the swollen jug, "Are you sure you don't have any other glasses?"

"I'm sure," Dream answers hazily, "You'd have to go down to the student lounge."

The vat of liquid gold is wrenched open. With a small, "Well," George presses it to his lips.

It washes down his throat imperiously, settling in the happy safe of his stomach. His eyes pinch as he lowers the bottle, hand lifting to wipe the sheen from his lips. He pushes it forward toward Dream.

"George," Dream murmurs in reprimand, voice a heated rumble and knees nudging George's legs mindlessly, "I am already *fucked* up and you want me to drink hard liquor?"

"Just one sip," George consoles, smile lazy.

"We're not gonna be able to *move* tomorrow."

"Come on, *baby*," George ushers impatiently. Dream's eyes spark with fascination, a smile parting the seam of his lips.

"What did you just call me?"

"*Baby*," George drawls, "Because you're being a baby, just drink it."

Dream's narrowed eyes don't leave George's as he takes the bottle, knuckles choking its iridescent neck. Wordlessly, he tips his head back, a fraction of the nectar draining from the glass.

George marvels at the dewy and tanned line of his throat, then the shimmering blade of his inclined jaw. Dream's face comes back into view as he sets the bottle on the corner of the table with a puffy exhale. His eyelids droop toward the center of his pupils, watching George with dazed infatuation.

"There," he mutters.

George's shallowly drumming heart faintly picks up its pace. He steps even closer with a mumbled and mindless, "Good," beginning to crawl onto Dream's lap, "Gonna bruise your neck."

Dream catches his hips, voice vaguely panicked, "What?"

George tilts the boy's head back again, blazed eyes dripping over his blank canvas skin.

"No, you can't kiss me either, George," Dream protests weakly. George's face ducks lower.

“Sure I can,” he says, voice crushed velvet.

His candescent lips drag up their claimed neck, ghostly on his shivering skin. Dream clutches tighter at his waist, a heavy exhale when George’s mouth brushes the underside of his jaw.

“*George.*”

Blindly, George lifts his face and meets the boy’s gaze again. His eyes have liquified, black and deep green blending messily. Fingers still denting Dream’s jaw, he pushes his thumb softly against the boy’s lip with lidded eyes of his own. He tugs it down and revels in the give of plush skin.

He remembers faintly the aim of tonight. Sure he *wants* to kiss Dream now, but how much better it’d be if he waited until he *needs* to.

“Fine,” he murmurs, climbing off of Dream and stepping back into the open carpet, towing a satin hand along with him, “Then dance with me.”

Dream stands, too, a sugary sheen to his gaze. “Dance?”

“Mhm.”

“To what?”

George’s hands cradle the base of Dream’s neck, the boy following as his hands find the small of George’s back. “Hum something, you’ve got a nice voice,” he answers.

Dream smiles softly, head wilting toward George’s as their bodies begin to subtly sway. “You want me to hum that song we like?” he offers lowly.

“Yes please,” George murmurs, stars haloing his heavy head.

“You start,” Dream says, nudging George’s cheek with his nose.

George searches his puddled thoughts for a moment, memorizing Dream’s scattered freckles as he does. The tune finds his tongue, mangled slightly, and George spells out the first stream of notes before falling short.

A wispy laugh from Dream tumbles onto his face, the boy urging, “Go on.”

“You were supposed to do it,” George protests, the air embracing their figures growing pleasantly warm.

A pretty pink smile sneaks across Dream’s lips, and as he leans closer he picks up where George left off. He hums the melody with great care, as though it’d shatter into constellations any other way. George is convinced silk roses sit in his throat.

They dance in the matured moonlight where it fashions a spotlight for them on Dream’s carpet floor. It spills like milk into their veins and coaxes their infatuation louder. Dream’s timber voice invades his listening skull in a gorgeous spectacle of spruce fire and the vanilla perfume of their romance.

Dream mimics only a few minutes of the song before he murmurs, “Okay, that’s all I can do.” His fingertips brush George’s back, goosebumps spreading beneath the thin cotton of his t-shirt.

“‘S pretty,” George says, thumb walking along Dream’s neck. He inclines his jaw higher, Dream’s heather-dusted eyes weakening further as he, too, draws mindlessly closer.

“I don’t have to drink anymore, do I?” he mumbles, ardently watching every intake of breath through George’s lips.

George tucks his lip between his teeth, smiling shyly, “I want to sit on the floor for a bit.”

Dream shakes his head, eyes narrowed and jaw clamping shut. “What business do you have on the floor, gorgeous?” he answers sourly. George’s smile widens.

“Come on.”

“You,” Dream grumbles, fingers digging harder into George’s soft waist, “Are a cruel, cruel person.”

With glimmering eyes, George separates them, careful as he lowers himself to the plush floor. Dream follows, the two pressing their backs to the side of his bed. George smiles to himself as he steals Dream’s hand, interlocking their fingers and pulling it into his lap.

“See, this is where I wanted us,” he murmurs contentedly, “When your brain’s all mushy from the alcohol. ‘Cause now you’re all I can think about.”

“I think we’re just in love,” Dream counters, words fuzzy.

George tugs a wider smile inward, leaving Dream’s statement unacknowledged as he continues. His head lolls to rest on his shoulder when he looks up at the boy. Dream stares drunkenly back.

“And you’re here, and I just remember,” George says, “Every single time you’ve touched me.”

Dream hums, flame flickering in the hearth of his pupils. He presses his forehead to George’s again, senses gone. George builds a temple of their burning fingers and melting skin and the starving greed of their lips.

“And then it’s less lustful and more of a worship,” he whispers.

Their noses knock in a dizzied dip closer. George’s palm slips from Dream’s to clutch at the boy’s jaw.

“And I just *really*—really need...”

“What?” Dream presses, voice a soaked hush. His hand gently curls over George’s thigh.

George’s eyes flutter shut briefly, mind thick with incoherencies. “Yeah,” George mumbles, not really paying any mind to his words, “Your—your hands are nice, that...that feels good.”

At the shallow hum, Dream’s fingers tighten. His face presses closer still, “What do you need?”

“I need...” George blinks, skin hot, “I need to kiss you.”

“So do it,” Dream dares sharply against his mouth.

“Can you...” George inhales the near fragrance of his skin, eyes shut as he closes their feeble distance, the words “*see straight*” caught on his tongue.

Their lush drag of lips is unbelievably soft, a surface-level catch of skin and black lacquer feeling to their lungs. George’s gone mind plunges into the rich and long-awaited feeling. Dream’s hand drifts higher up his thigh as he pushes even closer.

Another satiating kiss, this one faintly deeper though gentle still. A mere adoring touch of skin, whispering of divine beauty and severe devotion. An adolescent venture into their sinful cravings. The kisses remain as light until Dream tugs on his leg, murmuring, "Sit on my lap, princess."

George obliges, finding his spot on top of the boy again and sitting back on his thighs. His hands are feather-light around Dream's waist, Dream's tilting George's jaw at the perfect angle for him to sink into. Their gnawing lips chase an endless haze of kisses, the air quickly depleting from their lungs.

George's gracious fingers sneak underneath Dream's sweater, admiringly tracing each carve of muscle into warm skin. Dream kisses him rougher, messier, head tipping to the side in a determined pursuit of a more abrasive contact, eager to gloss George's mouth. Their thoughts and oxygen spill from their bodies, even more so when Dream's tongue scrapes with splendor into George's mouth.

They get no sleep, stolen by whims and their veins rushing with vermillion fever. The need to praise every last inch of skin, claim their favorite imperfections, is an endless endeavor and one they're glad to be burdened with. For the desire is rare, and they happen to be in love.

Tomorrow is spent in bed, a fruitless attempt to recover as they end up in pursuit of intimacy again. And the next tomorrow is the same, again and again until they've spent countless hours lost in the feeling of home. Adrenaline-soaked fingerprints, wild and naive minds, forever-tangled limbs, a gallery of uncontained smiles. Stupid and youthful and foolishly in love.

And where the city ends, their gullible hearts prevail still, footsteps continuing far past its sidewalks.

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